

**An Investigation into the Roots of ELT,
with a Particular Focus on the Career and Legacy of
Harold E. Palmer (1877–1949)**

Richard C. Smith

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed by myself, that the work is my own, and that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

I need to acknowledge that some of the contents of the thesis have been previously published, in works listed in Section 3 of the Bibliography. Some of these publications have been jointly edited or authored, with A.P.R. Howatt or Imura Motomichi. However, all the parts of this thesis represented in these joint publications have been researched and written by myself alone.

Richard C. Smith

*To the memory of my mother,
Kathleen Patricia Florence Smith, née Walton
(1934–1997)*

Abstract

To date there have been few serious historical investigations into the roots of ELT (defined here as post-World War II, UK-based enterprise in the domain of teaching English as a second/foreign language). The present thesis sheds new light on the sources of ELT methodology, with a particular focus on the career and legacy of the leading pre-war pioneer in the field, Harold E. Palmer (1877–1949).

The first chapter begins by delimiting the field under investigation before moving on to discuss why further investigation of the roots of ELT is required. With reference to previous studies, this chapter then justifies the specific focus adopted in Part II of the thesis on the contributions of Harold E. Palmer. Chapter 1 concludes with a summary of the overall aims and scope of the study.

Part I (Chapters 2 and 3) investigates the roots of ELT from a broad perspective, presenting overviews (based on consultation of primary and secondary sources) which are necessary for contextualizing and evaluating Palmer's specific contributions. Chapter 2 examines the late nineteenth and early twentieth century language teaching background, considering various methodological sources for Palmer's work and for ELT overall. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the different phases of development contributing to the post-war construction of ELT.

The main findings are reported in Part II (Chapters 4 to 9), which consists of a chronological account of Palmer's career, beginning with his formative years in Hythe (1877–1902; Chapter 4), moving on to discussion of his initial experiments with methods in Verviers, Belgium (1902–15; Chapter 5), his founding of a new 'science of language-teaching' in London (1915–22; Chapter 6), his initial attempts to put principles into practice in Japan (1922–27; Chapter 7), his years of established authority in Tokyo (1928–36; Chapter 8), and his attempts to apply research findings following his return to the UK (1936–49; Chapter 9). The research reported on here, based on consultation of primary sources and a number of works previously accorded little attention outside Japan, provides various new insights into Palmer's work, particularly that in Verviers and Japan. Palmer's legacy to ELT is then evaluated (in Chapter 10) on the basis particularly of research into A.S.

Hornby's pre-war work in Japan and his subsequent influence on post-war ELT orthodoxy.

Finally, lessons of this account for contemporary ELT are considered, and both limitations of the study and directions for further research are indicated.

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List of abbreviations

The following abbreviations are employed frequently in this thesis:

[IRET] <i>Bulletin</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute for Research in English Teaching</i>
IPA	International Phonetic Association
IRET	Institute for Research in English Teaching
IRLT	Institute for Research in Language Teaching
SOS	School of Oriental Studies, University of London
UCL	University College London

The following are also used, and are distinguished from one another in Chapter 1:

ELT	English Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
etsol	English teaching for speakers of other languages
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Note on Romanization

The Romanization system adopted in this thesis for Japanese names and words is a modified Hepburnian one (see Palmer’s (1930n) *Principles of Romanization*, pp. 120–23). Throughout, Japanese names are written in Japanese rather than westernized order: family name appears first, followed by given name.

1 Introduction, and rationale for the present study

1.1 Overall introduction

This investigation of the 'roots of ELT' has been motivated from within my own twenty-year history as a British 'native speaker' teacher of English and, latterly, teacher educator in the UK, France, Japan and now, again, the UK. I begin with an account of some parts of this personal history in order to clarify the reasons for my interest in the topic of the thesis, and as an introduction to its central concerns.

I first picked up work teaching English, one-to-one, on an occasional basis, when I was living in Paris at the age of eighteen. Then, as an undergraduate student of modern languages, I taught as a volunteer 'ESL' teacher a few times, to small groups of immigrant children. I had a summer job as a teacher in 1982, on a holiday course for Italian schoolchildren in a market town in the south of England. This was just prior to going to France for a year as an 'assistant d'anglais' in a lycée (1982–83), and on my return I taught on another summer holiday course in the south of England. For none of these jobs had I received any specific training, and for all of them being a 'native speaker' of English appeared to be sufficient qualification.

In 1984 I applied for and gained a job in Japan as a full-time 'assistant English teacher' in a high school. Before departing I took a full-time one-month course leading to the RSA Preparatory Certificate in TEFLA (Teaching English as a Foreign Language for Adults). This course gave me a basic training in what I now understand to have been a 'weak version' of communicative language teaching (Howatt 1984: 279), and I enthusiastically embraced its precepts. On arriving in Tokyo, my 'British English Teachers Scheme' cohort received one week of orientation led by English language teaching experts employed at the time by The British Council. For the following two years, I attempted, with British Council encouragement, to introduce communicative language teaching into my teaching of Japanese high school students. I then spent a further two years in a Japanese university, teaching part-time also to students of various ages in classes organized by a local branch of UNESCO. At this time I became actively involved in

organizing local meetings of a nationwide association of language teachers, the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT).

Having become 'professionalized' in this manner, and having decided to make my career in the field, I returned to the UK in 1988 to the University of Reading to study for my MA in Applied Linguistics. At the end of the year, I was asked to be Assistant Director of a course for British Council-sponsored Japanese university teachers, this being (again) a course which was explicitly designed to induct them into communicative language teaching principles.

I returned to Japan on 31 December 1989 and worked there for the whole of the ensuing decade (until 31 December 1999). For one year I was employed in a Junior College, where I used materials put out by various UK publishers, but in April 1991 took up a lectureship at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. Although I used published course books at first, I was able to begin to experiment in my teaching, with very motivated students, moving beyond the use of published materials and developing courses on World Englishes, Shakespeare, songs, current affairs, and so on. I also became increasingly interested in and involved in teacher education courses for students aiming to gain a (junior or senior high school) 'Teaching License'. As my Japanese language abilities developed, I was becoming more aware of the ideas of relatively 'progressive' Japanese teachers, and of the mixed attraction and suspicion many had for 'western methods'. I was also gradually becoming more aware of the limitations of my own original points of view on methodology, and more aware of the ethnocentricity these involved. Partly as a result of my growing understanding of Japan (and my contacts with Japanese who were critical of western influence), I was able to understand how limited my previous 'missionary zeal' to convert Japanese teachers to communicative language teaching had been.

These developments in my own thinking coincided with a critical turn in the wider field of (western) applied linguistics. By the time I became significantly involved in teacher education, I was becoming convinced of the need for 'appropriate methodology' (cf. Holliday's (1994) book with this title), and of the futility and arrogance involved in western teachers' (including my own previous) attempts to diffuse communicative language teaching without adaptation into the Japanese school system (Phillipson's (1992) *Linguistic Imperialism* had made a

strong impression in this connection). Language rights became an area for concern in my work within JALT, which had at the time an unofficial 'English only' policy despite its large Japanese membership. And my research, related to my teacher education work, took me back into junior and senior high schools, where I was concerned to attempt to describe the kind of teaching actually going on, as a basis for building 'from the bottom up' in my work with prospective teachers.

It was at this time (between about 1992 and 1995), as I was moving beyond my initial attachment to the latest western methods and materials, that I became increasingly conscious of and interested in the work of the Institute for Research in Language Teaching (originally established by Harold Palmer in 1923), conscious also of my ignorance of ELT history, and interested in discovering more. I began to attend IRLT annual conferences, and conferences of another association of Japanese English teachers with its own history, ELEC (originally founded to propagate Charles Fries's Oral Approach in 1956). Via discussions with senior members of these associations (in particular, Professor Wakabayashi Shunsuke of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies), I came to realize that a sense of history can provide teachers and teacher educators with a solid basis for critically evaluating the latest ideas, and I became increasingly interested in the paradox that one of the foremost pioneers of ELT was better remembered in Japan than in the UK. As I learned more, I began to reflect on the nature and consequences of this paradox, and on the way what I was learning about the work of Harold Palmer seemed far richer than the little I had learned about the history of methodology from UK or US sources.

At one IRLT conference, in 1995, a set of *The Selected Writings of Harold E. Palmer* was launched, in ten volumes (IRLT 1995). I had previously been aware of the reissue in seven volumes of *The Bulletin of the Institute for Research in English Teaching* (in 1985). In the same year I obtained a copy of Ozasa Toshiaki's (1995a) *Key Aspects of Palmer's Methodology*, but it was Imura Motomichi's (1997) monograph in Japanese which set me off on my own research into Palmer's career and legacy, the results of which are reported in the present thesis.

Regarding the process of this research (which is not necessarily clear from the product itself, but which may be of interest to record), I began with research into Palmer's teaching in London, proceeding to investigate his time in Verviers, his formative years in Hythe, his work in Japan and his retirement years, in that order. I

was assisted greatly by Palmer's great-granddaughter, who gave me unrestricted access to the primary sources (letters, unpublished writings and so on) in her possession. In these initial stages, I established a comprehensive bibliography of Palmer's writings (presented at the end of the thesis), and engaged in reading of these works.

I also found that I would need to investigate Palmer's precursors if I was to understand the nature of his contributions better. This took me into studies of nineteenth-century innovators including Jacotot, Hamilton and Marcel, and, especially, Prendergast, Heness, Sauveur, Berlitz and Gouin; also, Reform Movement figures including Sweet, Viëtor, Jespersen and Passy. Results of this research, for reasons of space, are presented mainly in a series of appendices to this thesis, although they also inform Chapter 2, on 'Late nineteenth / early twentieth century background'. Latterly, in order to evaluate Palmer's legacy, and gain a wider view of pre-World War II developments towards ELT, I carried out original investigations into the work of Michael West, Lawrence Faucett and C.E. Eckersley, and various post-war developments and authors (in particular, the career of A.S. Hornby). Partly, the results of these investigations are presented in appendices, although they also inform Chapters 3 and 10, respectively.

In my own case, the need to understand and act appropriately as a teacher educator in a particular overseas context led me to history, since a lack of historical awareness had so clearly accompanied the relative failure of western attempts at innovation, including my own small-scale efforts, in the past. I hope that this study will help others, particularly those most influenced by western paradigms, to recognize the value of 'historical sense' in their own settings. At the same time, I have found that historical research can help to reveal the strengths as well as limitations of ELT, and thus counter to some extent the blanket dismissals of the past which have tended to accompany 'progress' in the field, including recent critical work. At the very least, history, as I hope I will show, enables us to see our current problems in a wider perspective.

In the remainder of the present introductory chapter I offer (in section 1.2) a definition of the field under investigation, 'ELT', before moving on to consider why further investigation of the roots of ELT appears to be needed (1.3). I then justify the specific focus adopted in Part II of the thesis on the career and legacy of Harold

E. Palmer (1.4). The chapter ends with a statement of the overall aims and scope of the study (1.5).

1.2 What is 'ELT'?

In this thesis I investigate the methodological roots of 'ELT', employed here as a cover term for post-World War II, UK-based enterprise in the field of English teaching for speakers of other languages (that is, for people whose mother tongue is not English). In thus limiting the reference of the term 'ELT' both temporally (to post-World War II activity) and geographically (to UK-based enterprise), I am attempting to introduce some clarity in a field where the labels 'ELT', 'TESOL' and 'TEFL' tend nowadays to be used interchangeably, with no clear temporal or geographical restriction. In the following section (1.3) I discuss why this kind of restriction might be necessary, but I begin here by explaining further, from a historical perspective, what the term 'ELT', as used in this thesis, denotes.

Prior to World War II, there was relatively little UK-based activity in relation to English teaching for speakers of other languages (henceforth, 'etsol').¹ The few textbooks published in Britain specifically for such learners tended to couple 'English' in their title or subtitle with the phrases 'for foreign students', 'for foreigners', or 'for the foreigner', reflecting a limited and ethnocentric focus on visitors or immigrants to the UK rather than learners overseas. As will be discussed further in the body of this thesis, it was not until the 1930s, with the work of Harold Palmer, Michael West and Lawrence Faucett, and, in particular, the publication of their authoritative *Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language* (Faucett, Palmer, Thorndike and West 1936), that the phrase 'Teaching English as a Foreign Language' became established in the UK as a widely accepted cover term for etsol activities. From this point onwards, also, recognition began to be accorded in the UK to the extent and special characteristics

¹ In this thesis, when no geographical or temporal restriction is intended, the specially invented term 'etsol' will be used to refer to the activity of English teaching for speakers of other languages. I have deliberately left this in lower case to distinguish it from 'TESOL', 'ELT', 'TEFL' and so on. The latter are terms originally developed in and/or for particular contexts whose connotations are therefore not as neutral as is often intended.

of English teaching overseas. UK-based activity has ever since tended to be largely outward-looking, in contrast with American experience, which 'has more often been located inside the United States, [concerned with] teaching adult immigrants or foreign students' (Stevens 1977: 57).

The use of the phrase 'English Language Teaching' to denote the same field of activity as 'Teaching English as a Foreign Language' began only in the post-war years, becoming established due to the influence of the journal *English Language Teaching* (founded by the British Council in 1946). It is worthy of note that the title of this journal used neither the ethnocentric qualifier 'for foreign students' nor the phrase 'as a foreign language' in relation to English teaching, although for the first year of its existence it was subtitled 'A Periodical devoted to the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language'. The journal was intended for distribution overseas, not in the UK (where the distinction with English as a mother tongue instruction would presumably have been an important one to make).

In the 1950s and 1960s the acronym 'ELT' came to be used informally both as an abbreviated title for the journal and as the British cover term for the field of etsol, but this abbreviation did not appear in print until the publication of W.R. Lee's (1967) edited collection of articles from the journal, *E.L.T. Selections* (the use of full stops here indicating that the abbreviation had not yet become a widely recognized acronym). In 1971 this abbreviation was institutionalized with the renaming of the journal as *ELT Journal* (the word 'Journal' was added to the title in order to avoid confusions which had arisen between it and the profession as a whole).² In the present thesis, the term 'ELT' will be used to denote UK-based enterprise after World War II, but, only slightly anachronistically, with no distinction being made between the periods before and after the late 1960s when the acronym started to become more common than the full phrase 'English Language Teaching'.

The restricted use of 'ELT' in this thesis to denote post-war British activities in the field of etsol is consistent with definitions by other writers. Thus, although other abbreviations have gained in currency over the last thirty years — 'TEFL' and 'TESOL' in particular — Stevens (1977: 56) is clear that these were originally

2 Peter Collier, personal communication, 16/9/03.

'American terms', and that '[t]he principal British cover term is *English language teaching* (ELT)' (italics in original). Reinforcing this, Brumfit (1992: 346) has more recently stated that the term 'ELT' 'is not much used in North America, and tends not only to be the British term for the subject but also to be the term for the British approach to the subject'. Special characteristics of ELT (and of post-war US enterprise, which I shall term 'TESOL')³ in terms of 'approach to the subject' will be discussed in Chapter 10 below.

Within ELT itself, there are some further distinctions which need to be acknowledged at the outset of this investigation. During the 1950s a distinction began to be made by ELT professionals between the teaching of English as a *second* language (later, abbreviated as 'ESL') and the teaching of English as a *foreign* language (later, termed 'EFL'). At first these different phrases were used to distinguish only between teaching situations overseas, with the former referring to 'The teaching of English in countries where the language is not a mother tongue but has long been part of the fabric of society, usually for imperial and colonial reasons' (McArthur 1992: 1022), and the latter to 'The teaching of English in countries where it [. . .] is not or has not been until recently a local medium of communication or instruction' (McArthur 1992: 1023). As has already been stressed above, UK-based in contrast with US activity in the field was and has continued to be mainly oriented outwards, towards overseas contexts, but the 1960s saw an expansion in English teaching provision for immigrants into the UK from former colonies (i.e. ESL countries). Accordingly, '(T)ESL' became the term for this kind of teaching as well as for teaching *in* the (former) colonies. Similarly, in the 1970s in particular, there was a significant growth in private enterprise within the UK in relation to English teaching for overseas visitors (from EFL countries). '(T)EFL' then came to be used for this UK-internal situation as well as for teaching English in EFL contexts overseas (McArthur 1992: 1022–23). Distinctions between (T)ESL and

3 In the USA the preferred post-war terms were 'Teaching English as a Foreign Language' and 'Teaching English as a Second Language', used interchangeably with no difference in reference. These were then abbreviated to 'TESL' and 'TEFL', respectively. Since the late 1960s, 'TESOL' ('Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages') has largely taken over as the US 'catch-all' term, following the establishment of the association titled 'Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages' in 1966. As with 'ELT' prior to 1971 in the UK, there is some anachronism in referring to US-based post-war activity prior to 1966 as 'TESOL', but there are also advantages in using this as short-hand for a particular language teaching tradition.

(T)EFL within ELT will be referred to when necessary in this thesis, but 'ELT' should be interpreted as an umbrella term, referring to *all* post-war UK-based enterprise (including TESL and TEFL both overseas and in the UK), unless otherwise stated.

1.3 A rationale for research into ELT history

In this section I offer an overall rationale for the historical investigation of ELT. First I review previous work and highlight a continuing 'paucity of studies' (Stern 1983: 76) (section 1.3.1). I then present further reasons for research into ELT history which have been proposed, and can additionally be adduced (1.3.2).

1.3.1 The continuing 'paucity of studies'

At the outset of this thesis there is a need to build a general argument for historical research because, as we shall see, this has been, and remains a pursuit without a clear pedigree or mandate in the domains of ELT, TESOL and Anglo-American applied linguistics. Previously, only Stern (1983: 77–87) has comprehensively surveyed the historical research into modern language teaching which *has* been undertaken (up until 1983), although Pennycook (1989) has contributed a fresh perspective on the contributions considered by Stern, along with some extra references (notably to Howatt 1984 and Caravolas 1984). Musumeci (1997: 5) comes close to offering an update for the 1990s, but ultimately disappoints with the following claim: 'a review of recent publications in applied linguistics reveals *no* titles that espouse a historical approach' (emphasis added). The only studies she considers are works published in the 1960s, all of which had already been considered by Stern sixteen years previously.

Twenty years on from Stern's pioneering survey, there is still a need to report on a 'paucity of studies' (Stern 1983: 76) where history of language teaching research published in English is concerned, but the overall situation is not quite as bleak as Musumeci's cursory (1997: 5–6) review implies. Important monographs have been published in languages other than English (e.g. Macht 1986, 1987, 1990; Puren 1988; Klippel 1994); indeed, Musumeci's failure to refer to Caravolas'

carefully researched (1984) study of Comenius or the same author's (1994) overview of the period 1450–1700 (both written in French) seems a serious omission, given her own focus on Renaissance language teaching theory and practice. This kind of neglect of work published in languages other than English is an unfortunate characteristic of Anglo-American applied linguistics generally (see van Essen 1989; Phillipson 1992: 219) which I hope to counter, to some extent, in this thesis. It should be noted here, for example, that since 1987 there has existed an academic association in France, with its own journal, which is dedicated to the study of the history of the diffusion and teaching of French as a foreign language,⁴ while *two* national academic associations exist in Japan specifically for research into the history of English studies in that country.⁵ There is a particular lack of interest in history, it seems, within ELT and TESOL, but this is not necessarily so much the case in other language teaching traditions.

Account needs to be taken also of relevant historical work which has been carried out in two fields contiguous to applied linguistics, that is, education and linguistics 'proper'. Although historians in these domains doubtless still hope for a better-recognized role in the mainstream of their respective disciplines, both the history of education and the history of linguistics are already well-established as scholarly pursuits, with their own associations, conferences and journals.⁶ Recent

4 This association, the Société internationale pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde (SIHFLES) has published the journal *Documents pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde* since as far back as 1988. Source: <http://perso.club-internet.fr/fleasso/sihfiles/index.htm> (accessed 19 October 2003).

5 Namely, Nihon eigakushi gakkai (The Historical Society of English Studies in Japan) and Nihon eigokyoikushi gakkai (The Historical Society of English Teaching in Japan). As their names suggest, both focus on history in the Japanese context.

6 Journals in the field of history of linguistics include *Historiographia Linguistica* (founded in 1973), *Histoire–Epistémologie–Langage* (1979) and *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft* (1991). The first International Conference on the History of the Language Sciences (ICHoLS) was held in 1978, and in the same year the *Société d'Histoire et d'Epistémologie des Sciences du Langage* was founded in Paris. Subsequently, the Henry Sweet Society for the History of Linguistic Ideas was founded in the UK (in 1984), and the North American Association for the History of the Language Sciences was established in 1987 (Koerner 1995: 3, 6). International journals and (in parentheses) their parent associations in the field of history of education include, in English-speaking countries, *History of Education* (the British History of Education Society), *History of Education Quarterly* (the United States History of Education Society), *History of Education Review* (the Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society), *Paedagogica Historica* (International Standing Conference in the History of Education (ISCHE), based in Continental Europe), and *Historical Studies in Education* (based in Canada) (McCulloch and Richardson 2000: 82).

studies related to language teaching which have been published in English within the domain of the history of linguistics include doctoral theses by Collins (1988; published in modified form as Collins and Mees 1998) and Atherton (1994; cf. related 1995 and 1996a–c papers), and articles by Kabell (2000) and Linn (2002). Relevant contributions within the field of history of education have included studies by Bayley (1989, 1991, 1998) and Macht (1994).

The relative seriousness of attention accorded to history in the domains of education and linguistics is still far from being matched within Anglo-American applied linguistics; nevertheless, in the years between Pennycook's (1989) and Musumeci's (1997) surveys, several at least partially historical monographs relating to the history of language teaching and/or applied linguistics *were* published in the UK and USA (namely, Henrichsen 1989, Phillipson 1992, Pennycook 1994 and Spolsky 1995a). Since then, there have been further books which adopt a historical perspective, specifically Pennycook 1998, Cowie 1999 and Brutt-Griffler 2002. Post-1989 historical articles or chapters in widely available applied linguistics, ELT or TESOL journals and books have been rare but have included Howatt 1991, Spolsky 1995b, Meara 1996, Catford 1998, Cowie 1998 and Benson 2000. Mention should be made also of several recent encyclopedia entries on the history of language teaching (including Howatt 1994a, Pennycook 2000, Titone 2000, and van Essen 2000) and, in the same broad area of modern (but not, specifically, English) language teaching, there has also been a recent two-part special issue of *The Modern Language Journal* (Lantolf 2000–01) which is wholly devoted to historical research focused on back issues of the journal.

On the one hand, *pace* Musumeci and as a glance at the dates of the publications listed above shows, it could be said that there has been a small revival of interest in history within Anglo-American applied linguistics since the mid-1990s, corresponding to a similar upsurge in the mid- to late 1960s (noted by Musumeci 1997: 109–10), a point to which I shall return below. Overall, however, it is clear that there is still very little historical research being undertaken within Anglo-American applied linguistics, in contrast with levels of activity in the fields of history of linguistics and history of education and, in relation to language teaching, within some countries outside the English-speaking world (France and Japan having been singled out for particular mention above).

1.3.2 Arguments for history

Relatively speaking, there continues to be a 'paucity of studies' (Stern 1983: 76) in relation to ELT and TESOL history, and this provides a primary justification for further research. In this regard, Stern's (1983: 77) observations still hold true: as he suggests, studies of specific aspects of language teaching have not yet been 'carried out in sufficient number, scope, and depth to allow the piecing together of a fully satisfactory general history of language teaching and learning'. He goes on to indicate a need for

a large number of in-depth studies of [. . .] restricted scope, treating specific problems, settings or periods, or identifying events and persons whose contribution to the total picture of language teaching and learning through the ages needs more detailed and more objective investigation than is available at present.

(Stern 1983: 83)

Among neglected fields, he notes 'in particular the lack of biographies of great language teachers and of detailed and critical studies of their work' (p. 87).

Since the publication of Howatt's landmark (1984) *A History of English Language Teaching*, it seems that the only UK- or US-published monographs on aspects of the history of ELT or TESOL have been those by Henrichsen (1989), Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994, 1998) — and all of these are only partially historical — with Spolsky (1995a) and Cowie (1999) having provided complementary historical studies of testing and dictionary-compilation, respectively. Stern's strong (1983) recommendations for careful, in-depth historical treatment of particular problems, settings, periods, events or persons have not really been followed up in relation to the history of ELT or TESOL. (The most valuable exceptions, aside from Howatt's (1984) work (considered further below) have been Henrichsen's (1989) account of U.S. efforts to export Charles C. Fries's 'Oral Approach' to Japan in the 1950s and early 1960s; Phillipson's (1992) analysis of The British Council's promotion of ELT in the post-World War II era; Spolsky's (1995b) discussion of the World War II U.S. Army Specialized Training Program; Cowie's (1998) centenary tribute to A.S. Hornby, and, more tangentially, but no

less importantly, the books by Spolsky (1995a) and Cowie (1999) on the histories of psychometric testing and ELT learner dictionaries, respectively.)

Howatt (1984: xiii) prefaces his own study with a recognition that 'The history of English teaching is a vast subject', and that his 'relatively short book [. . .] of necessity has had to adopt a specific and therefore limited perspective'. He admits, in particular, that 'The European focus of [the] book is [. . .] only a small part of the history of the subject, hence the indefinite article in the title', and he hints at other 'cultural and educational patterns that require to be explored in their own time and context' (ibid.).

Taken together, then, the above-cited remarks by Stern (1983) and Howatt (1984) may be interpreted as providing sufficient scholarly justification in themselves for further in-depth studies such as that undertaken in the present thesis. While Part Four of Howatt's (1984) book offers a comprehensive and authoritative eighty-two-page survey of twentieth-century antecedents to and post-World War II developments in ELT (indeed, this survey has constituted the starting-point for my own investigations into the roots of ELT in the present thesis), there is still, as I shall hope to demonstrate, room for further research, particularly as regards the work overseas of the main precursors and founders of ELT. Building on the foundations laid by Howatt, I shall, then, attempt to complement his overview with the kind of 'in-depth study of [. . .] restricted scope' recommended by Stern (1983: 83, cited above), concentrating on a specific period (the first sixty years of the twentieth century), and, as will be further justified in section 1.4 below, identifying Harold E. Palmer as a person 'whose contribution to the total picture of language teaching and learning [. . .] needs more detailed and more objective investigation than is available at present' (ibid.).

Although, as I have argued in the above four paragraphs, it is possible to justify the particular focus of this thesis in purely scholarly terms, in relation to gaps in the existing literature (indeed, I shall continue to argue in this manner in 1.4 below), a convincing case for historical research within Anglo-American applied linguistics has perhaps not yet been sufficiently made, but may need to be made if a study such as the present one is to qualify as a valid and valuable contribution. Whereas the History of Linguistics (HoL) 'as a *bona fide* subject of academic research (in which doctoral dissertations can be written, for instance) began to

develop [. . .] during the late 1960s' (Koerner 1995: 3), the same cannot yet be said of History of Language Teaching ('HoLT') or History of Applied Linguistics ('HoAL'). Before continuing to justify my specific focus, then, I shall review the few previous arguments for historical research and appreciation in the field generally, and, with reference to some recent critical studies of aspects of ELT history (Phillipson 1992; Pennycook 1994, 1998), add what I believe to be some more compelling arguments than have so far been presented.

As noted above, Stern (1983) is one of the few authors to have offered explicit arguments in favour of historical research into language teaching, and the claim he makes for history is a strong one. Indeed, he goes so far as to identify the history of language pedagogy as one of the five source disciplines (along with the language sciences, the social sciences, psychology, and educational theory) 'which are essential to the development of a satisfactory theory of language teaching' (p. 517). He states as a primary reason here that an historical approach 'is needed if language teaching is not to fall victim to a succession of passing fashions' (ibid.), and he presents a more positive corollary of this elsewhere in the same book: 'Through studying the history of language teaching we can gain perspective on present-day thought and trends and find directions for future growth' (p. 76). Aside from these brief assertions, however, Stern fails to back up his strong claim for the value of historical research with much argumentation. It is perhaps partly for this reason that, as we have seen, his pleas for more historical research have not been heeded in any concerted fashion.

Bowen, Madsen and Hilferty (1985) are rare among writers of introductory methodological texts in the care they take to describe historical antecedents (as Stern (1983: 77) notes, in such books 'the historical antecedents are often no more than a backdrop to set off with bold strokes those aspects the writer wishes to emphasize, and the historical treatment is necessarily brief and often reveals a definite bias'). They are unique, also, in the way they explicitly discuss their rationale for looking (in the first chapter of their book) at methodology from a historical perspective (pp. 3–6). Their arguments for doing so echo Stern's lament about 'a succession of passing fashions' (cited above) when they state that 'Historical perspective should be useful in avoiding blind adherence to the most recent language cult on the scene, as well as restrictive polarization' (p. 4). More

positively, they argue for the role of history in encouraging 'cumulative development in the profession' and in serving as a means for evaluating the practical results of methods in specific historical circumstances (p. 5), thus serving to 'broaden the language teacher's range of resources and enable him [*sic*] to evaluate contemporary methodologies more knowledgeably and honestly' (p. 3).

By and large, however, as Maley (2001) points out, very little or no attention has tended to be paid to history within ELT or TESOL teacher education programmes. Maley (*ibid.*) has himself, like Bowen, Madsen and Hilferty (1985), offered a number of arguments for the study of history by practising professionals which can be adopted also as arguments for further research. From a negative perspective, Maley sees history as an antidote to the 'danger that arrogance could arise from ignorance of our past' (p. 5). More positively, he, like Stern and Bowen, Madsen and Hilferty, emphasizes the way history can provide perspective, since 'There is a sense in which we cannot know where we are going without an appreciation of where we have been' (*ibid.*); he also echoes Stern's suggestion that the history of language teaching could serve as a source discipline: 'the past offers us a rich source for generating new ideas [. . .] We can use it as a stimulus for our own present thinking' (p. 6). Here Maley appears to have in mind, particularly, the use of 'classic' texts to serve as a foil for reflection in teacher education programmes.

Overall, apart from the ideas mentioned above, there has to date been very little theorization of the need to establish historical studies at the heart of applied linguistics or etsol teacher education programmes. The arguments which have been presented, while worthy, have been rather vague and have not brought about much change in the overall lack of historical research and consciousness within the ELT and TESOL professions.

Recently, however, there has been what might be termed a 'critical turn' in the fields of applied linguistics and ELT / TESOL, in support of which claims about the colonial parentage and neocolonial inheritance of ELT (Phillipson 1992; Pennycook 1994, 1998) have played a major part. Just as in the 1960s the brief upsurge in North American history-writing noted by Musumeci (1997: 109–10) can be seen to have both reflected and contributed to a crisis of confidence in the

contemporary pretensions of applied linguistics and audiolinguism,⁷ so the 'subversive' role history can play in deconstructing prevalent assumptions may be seen to have been reasserted in influential recent works by Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994, 1998). Together, these authors have made an important contribution in subverting previous conceptions of the neutrality and universal relevance of ELT and applied linguistics, identifying these instead, on the basis of historical analysis, as particular, socio-politically constituted discourses with attendant limitations.

However, in writing history there are ever-present dangers of selecting facts to 'make an argument', and neither Phillipson nor Pennycook — in their evident desire to bring about change in current conceptions of applied linguistic activity — succeeds in avoiding 'propagandistic' history (Koerner 1995: 5). For example, a similar kind of accusation to that levelled by Pennycook (1998: 131) against Howatt (1984) (namely, that Howatt over-emphasizes the European roots of ELT at the expense of its supposed colonial heritage) can equally well be levelled at Pennycook (1994, 1998) and Phillipson (1992) themselves, for they can be seen to over-emphasize colonial at the expense of other antecedents (see 1.5 below). It could even be said that in proposing — by denigrating past activity — a 'better', more critical kind of applied linguistics to replace the pseudo-neutral, apolitical, 'technical' kind they see as prevalent, both Phillipson and Pennycook adopt the 'progressivist' strategy that is critiqued elsewhere by Pennycook (e.g. 1989), that of stereotyping the past in order to establish new ideas.

Due to the prevalent acceptance of Pennycook's and Phillipson's theses (and widespread accompanying uncertainty about the overall value of the ELT enterprise), there are particularly pressing contemporary needs for more careful investigation of the roots of ELT. For the purposes of the present investigation I

7 Here, I depart from Musumeci's (ibid.) own explanation of the 'scholarly enthusiasm in [sic] diachronic research' in the mid- to late 1960s: whereas she implies that Mackey (1965), Titone (1968) and Kelly (1969), among others, were 'proponents of the [audiolingual] method' who 'scrambled to cite historical evidence in favour of the new "scientific" pedagogy' (p. 110), these works, it seems to me, functioned rather to demystify the contemporary paradigm, that is, to subvert the claims of audiolinguism to be 'new', and, as is particularly clear in the cases of Mackey (1965) and Titone (1968), to subvert the dominance of 'linguistics applied' (Widdowson 1980) in favour of a less narrow, more eclectic conception of 'methodics'. As Kelly (1969: 9) noted, 'There has been a vague feeling that modern experts have spent their time in discovering what other men have forgotten. [. . .] [M]uch that is being claimed as revolutionary in this century is merely a rethinking and renaming of early ideas and procedures'.

shall *accept* the Phillipson / Pennycook premise that ELT should be viewed as a particular, locally constituted discourse or enterprise (hence my desire to define it narrowly as such in 1.2 above). By situating the roots of ELT firmly in particular contexts of production, I believe that it may be possible, following Phillipson and Pennycook, to identify and explain its limitations to a greater extent than is attempted by Howatt (1984). At the same time, I shall provide a corrective to the bias in their work towards emphasizing colonial antecedents, and thus restore the Continental European inheritance, as mediated by Palmer, to its rightful place in the pre-history of ELT. On this basis I shall attempt a new assessment of the roots of ELT which is, to an extent 'critical', but also, as explained further below, firmly based in good historical practice.

1.4 The relevance of Harold E. Palmer

Having argued the need for further historical research into the roots of ELT, in this section I justify the particular focus in this thesis on the career and legacy of Harold E. Palmer. I first make a preliminary attempt to establish Palmer's overall significance to the history of ELT (1.4.1) and then indicate how his work has been treated in previous 'Palmer studies' (1.4.2).

1.4.1 Why Palmer?

Harold E. Palmer (1877–1949) has been identified as a leading figure in the twentieth century history of English language teaching (Howatt 1984: 230) and, along with Henry Sweet (1845–1912), a pioneer in the development of applied (English) linguistics (Howatt 1984: 326–7; Titone 1968: 70–72). Indeed, as Stern (1983: 100) notes, 'Palmer is often considered to be 'the father of British applied linguistics'. Howatt (1994b: 2915) concurs with this assessment, viewing Palmer as 'the founder, with Daniel Jones [. . .], of what eventually became the British school of applied linguistics', even though the term 'applied linguistics' only itself gained currency after the foundation of the journal *Language Learning* in Michigan, in 1948. More recently, Meara (1998a) has described Palmer as a 'colossus', and his influence as 'almost immeasurable'.

Howatt devotes a chapter of his (1984) *A History of English Language Teaching* to Palmer, explaining that his significance lay in his systematic fusing of practical teaching ideas with the applied linguistic approach of the late-nineteenth-century Reform Movement (p. 212), thus providing the methodological foundations for what came to be a distinctive British approach to the theory as well as practice of teaching English as a foreign language. Howatt has also offered the following, more recent assessment:

It is difficult to over-estimate Palmer's contribution to twentieth-century English language teaching. [. . .] After Palmer, ELT was no longer merely a junior branch of modern language teaching, but an independent profession which led the way in applied linguistic innovation.

(Howatt 1994b: 2915)

Nevertheless, Palmer's contribution to the establishment of ELT appears to have been greatly *under*-estimated in some recent studies which adopt a historical perspective. Thus, Phillipson's (1992) critical account of the history of (English) linguistic imperialism and its relationship with ELT refers mainly to post-war English-medium education in (former) British colonies, in particular in Africa, and hardly mentions Palmer's work. Similarly, Pennycook (1994), in his own account of the 'cultural politics' of ELT, lays most emphasis on colonial and post-colonial education (in particular, in Malaysia and Singapore), and on post-war 'global' developments, making only passing reference to Palmer's work. Thus, while these writers have together introduced a necessary critical dimension into studies of ELT history, their focus on post-war developments, and on the teaching of English in colonial and post-colonial (i.e., 'ESL') contexts has led them largely to ignore Palmer's pivotal role in the overall development of ideas on the teaching of English as a foreign language. In this thesis I shall aim to redress this deficiency.

Another area of interest is the extent to which Palmer's thinking may have influenced post-war developments in the USA. It is notable in this connection that Titone (1968) presents a similar evaluation to Howatt's (cited above), despite writing primarily for an American readership and focusing on the history of foreign language teaching in general:

Most of [Palmer's] insights have become — sometimes without acknowledgement — permanent acquisitions of contemporary applied linguistics.

(Titone 1968: 72)

Titone devotes individual chapters to the work of Henry Sweet and Otto Jespersen (1860–1943) as well as to Palmer. He concludes that 'Palmer went beyond the achievements of Sweet and Jespersen. His closeness to the sophisticated views of contemporary applied linguistics is striking' (Titone 1968: 70). As we shall see below, a number of North American studies (among them, Haugen 1955, Diller 1971, and Glass 1979) have implied that Palmer influenced wartime and post-war American developments to a far greater extent than is generally recognized.

Finally, Palmer's specific contribution to the development of English language teaching in Japan is little appreciated in the west, but is highly regarded in Japan itself. Recently, the issue in ten substantial volumes of Palmer's *Selected Writings* (IRLT 1995) has been complemented by the publication of two book-length analyses (Ozasa 1995b and Imura 1997) which have focused attention anew on Palmer's work in Japan between 1922 and 1936. Indeed, the Japanese interest in Palmer's work contrasts significantly with a general lack of historical sensibility in Anglo-American applied linguistic and ELT / TESOL circles, where Palmer's contributions (as with those of many figures from the past) appear to be largely forgotten, in spite of the appreciations cited above and suggestions by, for example, Stern (1983: 517) that a historical perspective can be of value in clarifying contemporary applied linguistic problems.

The significance of Palmer's work, while highlighted by some scholars, does not, then, appear to be widely appreciated in the west. Accordingly, the present study is intended as an original 'in-depth' (Stern 1983: 83) and 'historiographical' (Koerner 1978) contribution which might not only help throw light on and raise awareness with regard to Palmer's specific achievements and significance but also contribute to the establishment of history as a relevant area of study within applied linguistics. Before describing the intentions and scope of the study in greater detail, I shall provide further preliminary justification below by means of a review of writings in English and Japanese on Palmer which have appeared during the half-century since his death.

1.4.2 Previous Palmer Studies

As has been implied above, Palmer's work has received much more attention in Japan than in the western 'centres' of teaching English as a foreign language. However, there have been some relevant works by non-Japanese authors, and I shall begin this survey by focusing on their contributions.

Following Palmer's death on 16 November 1949, obituaries were written in English by Gauntlett (1950), Gerhard (1951), Hornby (1950a), Jones (1950a, b), Mori (1950), Pider (1950), del Re (1950), Redman (1950) and Stier (1950). With the exception of those by Hornby and Jones, these obituaries were published in Japan, in *Gogaku kyoiku* (a bulletin issued by the Institute for Research in Language Teaching (IRLT)), and have not previously been referred to by scholars outside Japan. Unpublished letters from Jones to Palmer's widow indicate that he went to some trouble to get the facts right for his own (1950a, b) obituaries, which have since been frequently referred to for biographical detail, particularly in relation to Palmer's work in Verviers (1902–14) and London (1915–21).⁸ Titone's (1968: 57–59) biographical account, for example, is 'based almost entirely on Jones's article' (p. 57). However, being obituaries in slim publications, the accounts by Hornby and Jones are somewhat cursory. No obituary was published in *The Times* or other British newspapers, and no entry has yet appeared for Palmer in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.⁹

Two years before Palmer's death, Herman Bongers, a Dutchman, had published a study (Bongers 1947) which provides some biographical information derived from interviews with Palmer, as well as a useful summary of Palmer's ideas on vocabulary control and a bibliography which has since tended to be regarded as definitive. Later biographical studies based on personal reminiscence were to include those by Redman (1966, 1967a) and, most importantly, a lengthy essay by

8 Daniel Jones to Elizabeth [*née* Elisabeth] Palmer, 9 January, 16 February, and 17 February 1950, in the Personal Files of Victoria Angela. There are only slight variations between the two obituaries by Jones, relating to differences in readership: Jones 1950a, like Hornby 1950a, was written for *English Language Teaching*, while Jones 1950b contains more references to Palmer's phonetic work, being written for *Le maître phonétique*.

9 Howatt's (1994b) summary of Palmer's achievements has resulted, however, in an invitation to him to contribute an entry for forthcoming editions of this *Dictionary* (A.P.R. Howatt, personal communication).

Palmer's daughter, Dorothee Anderson (1969), based partly on the obituaries by Jones and Hornby and the work of Bongers and Redman, but also on primary sources including letters and newspaper cuttings. Anderson provides a few extra details in a slightly later (1971) article, published in Japan.

More recently, work by Collins (1988) and Collins and Mees (1998) on Daniel Jones and the Department of Phonetics, University College London (UCL) has provided new insights into the development of Palmer's thinking over the period (1915–21) when he worked in the Department. A number of studies specifically on Palmer's London publications have also appeared over the years, including those by Barrutia (1965), who describes *The Principles of Language-Study* (Palmer 1921a) as 'a neglected classic', and Roddis (1968), who summarizes this book along with individual works by Sweet and Jespersen. More recently, Prabhu (1985) has re-emphasized the continuing significance of this particular book in relation to current language teaching concerns.

Darian (1969) provides a broader treatment, linking the overall work of Palmer, Sweet and Jespersen. Indeed, as I have already indicated, Palmer has been viewed as a particularly significant figure in the modern history of language teaching and applied linguistics in several historical overviews. In his own history of teaching methods, Darian (1972: 65–71) presents a summary of Palmer's ideas as expressed in *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages* (1917b) and *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921a) while Titone (1968) devotes a chapter to Palmer, referring mostly to the same (London) publications as those focused on by Darian. Writing in Italian, Rainer (1977) also summarizes these publications, presenting biographical information derived from Anderson (1969).

There have been relatively few scholarly contributions which go beyond simply summarizing Palmer's London publications and/or repeating information from existing secondary sources. Exceptionally, Titone (1968) concludes his chapter on Palmer with the assessments already cited above, and emphasizes the continuing relevance of Palmer's 'principled eclecticism' (p. 110). Another, less widely diffused exception is Tickoo's (1968) Ph.D. thesis, Chapter Ten of which ('Harold E. Palmer and the 'Eclectic Approach' to foreign language teaching') presents a sixty-seven-page analysis of Palmer's thinking on the relationship

between language teaching theory and practice. Parts of this chapter were subsequently incorporated into two articles in *ELT Journal* (Tickoo 1982a, 1986). In the first of these articles, Tickoo emphasizes the practical nature of Palmer's achievements, and in the second advances the interesting and plausible (although unproven) hypothesis that Palmer's ideas on substitution were influenced by the work of Thomas Prendergast (1806–86). Diller (1971: 4), taking his cue from Haugen (1955), implies that there may have been some influence *from* the early work of Palmer on the mimicry, memorization, and pattern drills of audiolingualism. The same basic suggestion forms the main thesis of another Ph.D. dissertation (Glass 1979). Signalling 'the vast contribution to language pedagogy and linguistic theory made by Palmer in the first part of the twentieth century' (p. 125), Glass assembles an impressive list of similarities between Palmer's early ideas and audiolingual theory, attempting to 'rewrite orthodox history' in order to show that 'the fundamental ideas underlying audio-lingualism are *not* to be found in the structural-behaviorist alliance. [. . .] Palmer was antecedent to the structural linguists and behaviorist psychologists in articulating these ideas' (p. 2). Glass does not attempt to explain how Palmer's influence, if any, was mediated. However, the major deficiency of this dissertation, as with almost all of the studies so far mentioned, is the static view it presents of Palmer's ideas, resulting from a limited focus on only a few of his works, combined with an over-emphasis on those of his ideas which predated audiolingualism. Finally, a more recent study by Véronique (1992), while focusing in the same manner as several of the studies already mentioned on comparing Palmer's ideas, as expressed in his major London publications, with those of Jespersen and Sweet, presents, like Titone (1968) and Tickoo (1968), original reflections on Palmer's conception of the relationship between theory and practice.

As Howatt (1984: 236) recognizes, relatively little is known in the west about how Palmer's ideas matured during his time in Japan between 1922 and 1936. Until recently, the only widely available sources have been the somewhat jaundiced accounts by Redman (1966 and 1967a), the former as excerpted in Anderson (1969), and another rather negative assessment of Palmer's impact on English education in Japan by Yamamoto (1978). However, as I will show in Part II (Chapters 7 and 8), these accounts seem to be based on serious misconceptions with

regard to the intended role of the Institute for Research in English Teaching (IRET) which Palmer founded in 1923. Just as seriously, they fail to indicate the extent of his publishing activity following the Institute's establishment, and fail, also, to acknowledge the degree to which Palmer's ideas developed in Japan, were appropriated by Japanese teachers associated with the Institute and have continued to influence Institute activities up until the present-day. Exceptionally, Cowie (1999) has recently analysed a number of IRET publications in order to cast light on the lexicological work which Palmer engaged in and instigated during the latter half of his stay, but Palmer's broader achievements in Japan are still far from being fully recognized outside that country.

Howatt's (1984) *A History of English Language Teaching* has already been extensively referred to above, since it provides perhaps the clearest indication to date of Palmer's importance to the history of ELT, and the fullest picture of his achievement. Although Palmer's reputation enjoyed something of a revival during the 1960s (with the republication of four of his major works by Oxford University Press and the 'rediscovery' both of these works and of a history behind audiolingualism by several writers in the North American context (Barrutia 1965; Roddis 1968; Titone 1968; Darian 1969, all referred to above), it took another decade or two for Palmer's importance again to be asserted (this time, in fuller form, in Howatt's (1984) history and the articles by Tickoo (1982a, 1986) which I have already referred to). In the 1980s there were also some citations of Palmer's work in relation to areas of contemporary concern such as syllabus design and Stephen Krashen's 'learning'/'acquisition' distinction (see, for example, White 1988: 11–12). Nowadays, with the recent revival of interest in lexicology in British applied linguistic circles, there are occasional signs that Palmer's work in this particular area has not been entirely forgotten (see citations by Cook (1998: 62) and Meara (1998b: 290), in addition to the important (1999) study by Cowie already mentioned); generally, however, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the full extent of Palmer's contributions to the early development of ELT and applied linguistics is today largely ignored in the west, including in the UK, despite the efforts of historians such as Howatt (1984, 1994b) to maintain an awareness of them.

Turning now, then, to Japan, there appears to exist in this country a far greater academic interest, generally, in the (local) history of English language teaching than in Anglo-American applied linguistic and ELT / TESOL circles. Numerous overviews of the history of English studies and English language teaching in Japan have appeared over the last half-century, and few of these fail to recognize Palmer's importance in that history. Here, then, I will mention only writings which make explicit reference in their title to Palmer or his work, basing this overview on the bibliography compiled by Imura (1997: 273–77).

Alongside the obituaries in English which appeared in *Gogaku kyoiku* (already mentioned above), others were written in Japanese, among them those by Takezawa (1950) and Saito (1950). There were also a number of later reminiscences by former colleagues of Palmer which focused mainly on biographical aspects, including: Anon. [Hoshiyama Saburo?] 1959; Jimbo 1961 (discussing Palmer's Japanese language abilities); Ichikawa 1961 (containing transcripts of letters from Palmer); Fujita 1964; and Naganuma 1966. Two publications issued by the Phonetic Society of Japan, under the direction of another former colleague, Onishi Masao (who frequently corresponded with Palmer's daughter following her father's death), also provide biographical information and some summaries of Palmer's work (Phonetic Society of Japan 1971; Onishi 1981).

Aside from biographical pieces, there were also, in the late 1950s and 1960s, a number of summaries of Palmer's ideas, among them: Kuroda 1959a, b; Ishibashi, Otsuka and Nakajima 1963; Ogawa 1964a; Serizawa 1964; Hoshiyama 1968; and Onishi 1969. The last-mentioned of these was the first book to be devoted solely to Palmer. Kunihiro (1964) discusses one of Palmer's relatively early works, his (1924b) *A Grammar of Spoken English*. Of particular analytic interest, however, is a series of three articles by Yambe (1967), the best-known Japanese proponent of Charles C. Fries's Oral Approach, in which he compares Palmer's ideas with those of Fries (see also Ogawa 1958 for an earlier indication of underlying similarities).

Scholarly interest in Palmer has, since the 1960s, largely followed the fortunes of the Institute for Research in Language Teaching (IRLT), the successor organization to the Institute for Research in English Teaching (IRET) established by Palmer in 1923. Whereas participation in the Institute was at a low ebb in the 1960s and 70s, due to the dominance of the Oral Approach (see Henrichsen 1989; Imura

1997: 251–52), the decline of IRLT was reversed in the 1980s and 90s, and it is during these two decades that most research of importance in relation to Palmer has been carried out in Japan.

This period of renaissance may be said to have begun with two articles (Masukawa 1978; Nakao 1978) in a landmark survey entitled *TEFL in Japan* (Koike, Matsuyama, Igarashi and Suzuki 1978). In 1982, a special issue of *Eigokyoiku Journal* was dedicated to Palmer, containing articles by among others Horiguchi (1982) and Takanashi (1982) (to be discussed further below).

It is from around this time that Japanese scholars began to develop a properly ‘historiographical’ (Koerner 1978) approach to Palmer’s work, engaging in the discovery and investigation of new primary sources rather than being content simply to summarize ideas on the basis of his best-known writings and previous secondary accounts. Two main centres for this type of research have developed: one in Hiroshima, the other in Tokyo. I shall consider each in turn.

One major centre for Palmer studies has been the Hiroshima branch of the Society for History of English Studies in Japan (Nihon eigogakushi gakkai Hiroshima shibu), based at Hiroshima University. In this context, Ozasa (1982) has discussed a previously unreferenced work by Palmer which is of some interest, his (1944c) *Three Lectures* (published in Brazil and discovered by Ozasa in the U.S. Library of Congress). Matsumura (1984) has similarly uncovered and presented new information relating to lectures Palmer gave in Hiroshima, while Tanaka (1991a, 1992, 1993) has presented a series of reports discussing letters Palmer wrote to a former colleague, Mori Masatoshi, following his return to England. The third of these (Tanaka 1993) includes analysis of Palmer’s views on the (1937) Japanese invasion of China, on the basis of a five-page dialogue in three acts entitled ‘The Case of A and B’ which Palmer wrote for Mori in order to press home his point that this invasion was unjust.

Finally, and more recently, an important study by Ozasa, published both in a Japanese version (1995b) and a shorter, English version (1995a), has shed new light on the development of Palmer’s ideas over the time he spent in Japan, indicating, on the basis of reports of demonstration lessons at the IRET Convention and Palmer’s own lectures, how he moved beyond initial attempts to introduce structural reform, gradually recognizing, with the support of Japanese teachers, the need to

adapt his teaching methodology to the Japanese secondary school context. Ozasa's (1995b: 275–81) bibliography also represents a significant advance on that of Bongers (1947: 350–53), generally presenting more accurate detail and including a number of previously unreferenced writings.

The second centre of Palmer studies in Japan has been Tokyo, where IRLT is based, and where teachers at and graduates of, in particular, Tokyo University of Education (now Tsukuba University) and Tokyo University of Foreign Studies have maintained a particular interest in Palmer's work. Palmer himself taught part-time at both universities, and his ideas continued to be conveyed to post-war teacher trainees by his former Institute colleague Kuroda Takashi, as well as Ito Kenzo and Ikenaga Katsumasa, at the former institution, and by Ogawa Yoshio and Wakabayashi Shunsuke at the latter university.

Significant studies in the Tokyo context have included Horiguchi's (1981, 1982) analyses of Palmer's textbooks for Japanese secondary school students, including the *Standard English Readers* (1925–27), and Takanashi's brief (1982) overview of Palmer's career and influence in Japan. Nakano (1984) reported in the newsletter of IRLT on an interview conducted with Dorothée Anderson, Palmer's daughter (who died in 1995), while in 1985 an important publishing event occurred with the photographic reproduction in seven volumes of all issues and supplements of the pre-war IRET *Bulletin* (IRLT 1985). In the seventh volume of this set, Kuroda (1985) presents new information relating to Palmer's career on the basis of a curriculum vitae in Japanese discovered in Tsukuba University archives, while Ono (1988), providing details of Palmer's teaching at the Peers' School, cites another curriculum vitae which is kept in the library of Gakushuin University. More recently, Imura (1994) has discussed the relationship between Palmer and Okakura Yoshisaburo, the doyen of English language education in Japan at the time Palmer arrived in Japan. In his important (1997) biographical study, additionally, Imura both synthesizes previous accounts of Palmer's work in Japan and presents valuable new information, effectively contextualizing Palmer's contributions within the overall development of English education in Japan in the twentieth century and identifying, like Ozasa (1995a, b), two main phases in the development of Palmer's ideas in that context.

Imura has also been one of the IRLT researchers primarily responsible, with Shiozawa Toshio and Wakabayashi Shunsuke, for the recent publication in ten volumes of *The Selected Writings of Harold E. Palmer* (IRLT 1995). This set brings together all the best-known and a variety of less well-known works by Palmer (the majority of them originally published in Japan), under the following thematic arrangement: Theory, Teaching Procedures, Grammar, Pronunciation (all two volumes each), Vocabulary and Miscellaneous Writings (one volume each).

In itself, the publication of Palmer's *Selected Writings* is evidence of the extent to which his work is still appreciated and seen to have contemporary relevance in Japan. Although an 'international edition' was published in 1999, this was purchased by very few institutions or individuals outside Japan and is now out of print.¹⁰ The paradox remains, then, that Palmer is far better remembered in Japan than in the UK, despite his apparent significance as the foremost pioneer in the early development of an 'applied linguistic' approach to the teaching of English as a foreign language.

1.5 Aims and scope of the present study

In this section I clarify the scope, approach and aims of the present study, drawing together considerations outlined in the previous sections of this chapter.

As we have seen, the continuing Japanese interest in Palmer contrasts strikingly with a general lack of appreciation of his work in western applied linguistic and ELT circles, although, with recent exceptions (Phillipson 1992; Pennycook 1994, 1998), his importance has been consistently acknowledged by the few historians of these fields. These acknowledgements have come despite a lack of appreciation of the nature and full scale of Palmer's work in Japan, or of the studies by Japanese scholars relating to this work. With only a few exceptions, indeed, western commentaries on Palmer have tended to rely heavily on the same secondary sources and have, by and large, been content simply to summarize his best-known works for a readership assumed to be unfamiliar with them, and/or to cite him as a precursor in a particular area of current applied linguistic interest (most recently,

lexicology and lexicography, but previously syllabus design, the 'learning'/'acquisition' distinction, and audiolingual methodology). Above all, existing accounts fail to show the development of Palmer's ideas, and the way these were related to his evolving professional interests. At the same time, Japanese studies have tended to focus primarily on Palmer's attempts to reform English education in Japan, without situating his achievements in a wider context.

What seems to be needed, and what this thesis will attempt to offer, then, is an overview of the 'whole Palmer' which indicates his contributions in a variety of areas, which involves particular consideration of his work in Japan, and which at the same time situates this work in a broad spatial and temporal context. In order to meet these requirements, it seems necessary to provide a chronological account which shows how Palmer's ideas developed over time in a variety of areas, both in line with his evolving professional interests and in relation to contemporary developments elsewhere. The body of this thesis (Part II) therefore tracks Palmer's career through its major phases. However, in order for this account to offer critical assessment and not simply be a biography / bibliography combined with summaries of his major works, it also seems necessary to establish the significance of Palmer's particular contributions in relation to previous, contemporary and later historical developments. Accordingly, I precede my main account with overviews, in Chapters 2 and 3, respectively, of overall methodological sources for ELT and of phases preceding its establishment, while Chapter 10 of the thesis considers Palmer's overall legacy.

Having established the scope and structure of the thesis, I turn now to the methodological approach adopted. As has been implied throughout the present chapter, a major failing of many existing studies which adopt a historical perspective on language teaching or applied linguistics is that they involve little, or uncritical reference to primary sources and tend to be over-reliant on, and insufficiently critical of existing secondary sources. This has certainly tended to be true of previous narratives and assessments of Palmer's career, which, almost without exception, rely on Jones 1950a, 1950b and Anderson 1969 and (among Japanese scholars) Kuroda 1985 for details of Palmer's formative years and his work in Verviers and London. For Palmer's work in Japan, western writers

10 Rudy Smet, Hon-no-Tomosha representative, personal communication by e-mail, 5/7/04.

(including Anderson 1969) have almost exclusively relied on Redman's (1966, 1967a) and Yamamoto's (1978) accounts, which, as I shall indicate in the body of the thesis, both present one-sided and inaccurate views of his work there, while for Palmer's 'retirement' years the main source has again tended to be Anderson 1969. For my own account, I rely as far as possible on primary, including archival sources, and adopt a critical stance towards secondary sources, in this manner aiming both to correct inaccuracies in and considerably 'fill out' previous accounts and assessments of Palmer's career and legacy.

A second important foundation for the investigations reported in this thesis has been the attempt, early on, to establish a comprehensive and accurate bibliography of Palmer's writings. Previous bibliographies in English are far from complete, neglecting in particular many publications in Japan, and they tend to contain many inaccuracies. While the bibliography offered by Bongers (1947: 350–53) and adopted, with only slight modifications, by Anderson (1969: 161–66) has for many years been considered 'a complete list' (Titone 1968: 72), recent Japanese studies have shown that this is far from being the case. In order to compile my own 'Comprehensive bibliography of Palmer's writings' (presented at the beginning of Volume II), I have benefitted from initial guidance regarding his Japan publications from the bibliographies compiled by Imura (1995: 572–76; 1997: 263–72) and Ozasa (1995b: 249–66, 275–78). However, many additional works have been included, and fuller and more accurate information is provided. Details have been checked, wherever possible, against copies of the writings themselves, in particular in IRLT 1985, IRLT 1995, the IRLT Library and the British Library, and I have indicated my sources where this has not been possible.

In accordance with the above considerations, this thesis has the following major aims:

- 1) To present a fuller and more accurate account than has so far been available of the career and legacy of Harold E. Palmer, who has been previously acknowledged as the most significant figure in the early twentieth century history of teaching English as a foreign language and an important precursor of post-World War II ELT and applied linguistics;

- 2) On this basis, to shed light on the roots of ELT, with a view to establishing more solid foundations for present-day professionalism in this field; and
- 3) By presenting an adequately justified and carefully researched account, to show the value and enhance the status of research into the history of language teaching within applied linguistics.

Part I

The roots of ELT: A preliminary survey

2 Late-nineteenth / early-twentieth-century background

Various late nineteenth and early twentieth century strands of influence need to be considered both for their specific contribution to Palmer's ideas on language teaching (which are to be discussed in detail in Chapters 4 to 9), and for their connection, via Palmer and others, with post-World War II ELT orthodoxy (see Chapter 10). I shall examine the following in turn in this chapter: Utilitarian methods for adult language learning (2.1), The Reform Movement (2.2), and the Direct Method (2.3). While the ideas and practices discussed in this chapter relate to modern language teaching in general, specific developments leading towards ELT will be considered in the following chapter.

2.1 Utilitarian methods for adult language learning

During the nineteenth century, there seems to have been a considerable overall expansion in the adult market for practical language learning in Europe and North America. As we shall see, new demands connected with expansion in trade, tourism, emigration, missionary activity and colonization gave rise to a variety of practical innovations and theoretical suggestions which predated the more coordinated, school-focused Reform Movement of the century's last two decades.

In one significant development, textbooks which brought together grammatical rules, word-lists and sentence translation exercises in a carefully graded sequence began to be published in increasing quantities. These 'grammar-translation' materials were originally designed to lessen the burden for learners who had not necessarily been prepared by a classical training to shift for themselves using dictionaries, grammar books and texts. A basic textbook model would be constructed and then adapted to every major language, with courses of French for German speakers, Spanish for English speakers, Italian for French speakers, and so on. Johann Franz Ahn (1790–1865) and Heinrich Gottfried Ollendorf(f) (1803–65) were the best-known authors towards the middle of the century, and their books

were extremely popular; indeed, grammar–translation principles are still reflected in many ‘teach yourself’ courses to this day.

More radically, early- to mid-nineteenth-century pioneers including Joseph Jacotot (1770–1840), James Hamilton (1769–1829), and Claude Marcel (1793–1876) offered what they presented as ‘natural’ and therefore efficient *alternatives* to memorizing grammar rules and word-lists, and translating sentences. These writers, working independently from one another, advocated different forms of inductive learning, with a focus on the use of connected texts (see Appendices 1.1 and 1.2). Marcel, for one, argued that henceforth ‘Utility is the test by which the value of instruction ought to be estimated’ (Marcel 1853, I: 126), although elsewhere in his work he was also to advance arguments for the ‘mental culture’ associated with foreign language study.

In the second half of the century — the period I shall focus on here — new practical demands were reflected in the growing popularity of various ‘patent’ alternatives to grammar–translation in the self-study market. Also, particularly towards the end of the century, increasing numbers of private language institutes were established and public consciousness grew of the innovative classroom teaching approaches associated with them. As we shall see (in Part II), Harold Palmer’s own early teaching experience (in the first decades of the twentieth century) was gained mostly as a teacher of adults, and his materials and suggestions were developed initially with them, rather than schoolchildren, in mind. I shall, then, devote some space here to understanding the work of the innovators who exerted most influence in the arena of ‘utilitarian’ methods for adult language learning towards the end of the nineteenth-century, namely Thomas Prendergast, Lambert Sauveur and Gottfried Heness, Maximilian Berlitz, and François Gouin.

One figure whose ideas may have influenced Palmer was the Englishman Thomas Prendergast (see Appendix 1.3). Prendergast’s ‘Mastery System’, which he developed on the basis of his own language learning experience in India, was ‘specially designed to meet the wants of adults, and to foster the invaluable process of self-instruction’ (Prendergast 1864: ix). Prendergast’s system is expounded mainly in two books, his (1864) theoretical work, *The Mastery of Languages*, and his (1868a) *Handbook to the Mastery Series*. The latter is a practical, though somewhat long-winded introduction to a series of textbooks published by

Longmans, Green — initially for French and German (1868b, c), and, in ensuing years, for Spanish (1869), Hebrew (1871) and Latin (1872). Prendergast's ideas and textbooks were intended to assist in self-instruction, rather than in classroom learning. In this respect they constituted an alternative to other self-study courses popular at the time, in particular those by Ahn and Ollendorff (see above). In essence, Prendergast's own system involved memorization by frequent repetition of complex sentences, each of which exemplifies as many grammatical rules as possible, and from which other sentences can be 'evolved'. Some contemporaries considered the system to be a development of Ollendorff's (Anon. 1886; Boase 1896), but Prendergast's approach is in fact closer to that of other innovators such as Jacotot, Hamilton and Marcel, since he considers that 'the preliminary study of grammar is unnecessary' (1864: v). Explicit grammar teaching is rejected, then, in favour of the inductive learning of grammar rules on the basis of understanding gained through translation, and 'mastery' is gained through a process which is claimed to be 'natural'. Prendergast states that his system is based on the way children learn to speak: they are, he says, 'impelled by instinct to imitate and repeat the chance sentences which they hear spoken around them' (1864: iii), and afterwards to interchange and transpose the words so as to form new combinations.

In other ways, too, Prendergast's priorities are quite different from those of his grammar-translation competitors in the self-study market. Firstly, he is opposed to the memorization of word lists: 'the acquisition of unconnected words is comparatively worthless' (1864: v). Secondly, rather than favouring grading from simple to complex sentences, Prendergast suggests that the sentences to be memorized should, from the beginning, be as complex as possible, since all the grammar one needs to know will then be contained within them. Following memorization, the learner is expected to ring the changes on the words and phrases within memorized sentences, recombining them to make a wide variety of shorter sentences. As in the 'decomposition' exercises of Marcel's neglected (1833) *Méthode Marcellienne*, emphasis is placed on oral fluency in repeating and creating new sentences; in this respect also, then, Prendergast approached the task of language learning with different priorities from the proponents of grammar-translation, whose principal practical focus was on translation from and into the *written* language.

Like Prendergast, Gottfried Heness and Lambert Sauveur (see Appendix 1.4) were concerned above all with the adult market and with utilitarian objectives, and placed emphasis on the development of proficiency in *speaking* the foreign language. Unlike Prendergast, however, they were concerned with the development of a teaching method specifically for the classroom, and they were significant also for their complete abandonment of the time-honoured technique of translation. The ideas of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827), most associated in the public mind with the notion of ‘object lessons’ in which children explore phenomena in the world around them, appear to have been first introduced into language teaching for adults by a German emigrant to the USA, Gottlieb Heness — although it was Lambert Sauveur (1826–1907), co-founder with Heness of the Boston School of Languages, who was to gain most of the credit for what came to be known as the ‘Natural Method’.

In 1875, Heness published a German textbook to illustrate the method, with an introduction in English (as summarized by Larudee 1964). Here it is made clear that during the first few weeks of German instruction, a text is not used. Grammar instruction is also to be avoided until after students have acquired an adequate proficiency in speaking and reading, and charts are provided at the end of the book to aid in grammar instruction in the target language. In Heness’s introduction, a variety of additional principles are proposed, among them:

- Make use of similarities between German and English words;
- The meaning of new language can be conveyed with the support of words the student already knows, and by means of objects (‘this is a book’, ‘it is big’, ‘it is blue’, and so on);
- Meaning can also be conveyed by means of pictures;
- Questions should be concise and clear, so that answers come quickly and students do not have time mentally to translate;
- There must be frequent exercise in speaking the same thing until this is done well and fluently. To this end, any incident occurring within or outside the classroom may become the topic of conversation, and after a time pupils should be allowed to converse freely among themselves, since questions and answers ultimately constitute only an artificial, forced kind of conversation;

- Imperative forms of the verb such as ‘Sitz! Steh auf! Geh!’¹ accompanied by actions can be employed as a useful and important means of instruction in speaking.

By the time, twenty years later, when the ‘Committee of Twelve’ presented its official report on modern language teaching in the USA, it is clear that many teachers had heard about and had succeeded in adapting to their own purposes what had come to be known as the ‘Natural Method’. By now, ‘in its extreme form’, this is reported to have involved:

a series of monologues by the teacher, interspersed with exchanges of question and answer between instructor and pupil — all in the foreign language; almost the only evidence of system is the arrangement, in a general way, of the easier discourses and dialogues at the beginning, and the more difficult at the end. A great deal of pantomime accompanies the talk. With the aid of this gesticulation, by attentive listening, and by dint of much repetition the beginner comes to associate certain acts and objects with certain combinations of sound, and finally reaches the point of reproducing the foreign words or phrases. When he has arrived at this stage, the expressions already familiar are connected with new ones in such a way that the former give the clue to the latter, and vocabulary is rapidly extended, even general and abstract ideas being ultimately brought within the student’s comprehension. The mother tongue is strictly banished, not only from the pupil’s lips, but, as far as possible, from his mind. Not until a considerable familiarity with the spoken idiom has been attained is the scholar permitted to see the foreign language in print; the study of grammar is reserved for a still later period. Composition consists of the written reproduction of the phrases orally acquired.²

Henness’s ideas, as expressed in the introduction to his 1875 textbook, are quite recognizable in this description.

Whereas the Committee of Twelve reports on a lack of system in the method, and Sauveur’s (1874b) *Causeries* give evidence that conversations in the Henness–Sauveur school were wide-ranging and to a large degree spontaneous, Maximilian Berlitz (1852–1921) (see Appendix 1.4) was to reduce the Natural

1 ‘Sit down! Stand up! Go!’

2 Committee of Twelve of the Modern Language Association of America 1898/1899: 1397–98. A very similar description had been provided by Kroeh (1887: 178–79), ten years earlier.

Method to a carefully planned operation guided by rigid principles and textbook materials with a closely specified lexical and grammatical syllabus.

Even by 1917 the 'Fundamental Principles of the Berlitz Method' (and little more than these was ever offered in explicit explanation or justification of the method) remained very similar to those of Heness (as summarized above): (i) 'Direct association of Perception and Thought with the Foreign Speech and Sound' and (ii) 'Constant and exclusive use of the Foreign Language', while the means for attaining these ends were basically the same: '(I) Teaching the Concrete by Object Lessons; (II) Teaching of the Abstract by the Association of Ideas; and (III) Teaching of Grammar by Examples and Ocular Demonstration' (Berlitz 1917/1937: 3).

What was to distinguish Berlitz, however, was his entrepreneurial acumen and his achievement in systematizing the Natural Method in graded textbook materials so that it could be adopted by native speakers with very little or no teaching experience. Having emigrated to the United States from southern Germany in the early 1870s and opened a language school in Providence, Rhode Island in 1878, Berlitz produced textbooks from 1882 onwards which were ultimately to cover all the major and some of the minor European languages, as well as a number of non-European ones. Like Ahn and Ollendorff before him, Berlitz established a successful basic format, in his case consisting of two books, which he then translated (or had translated) for the various languages to be taught in his schools. Evidently, the fact that all teachers were to be native speakers and that use of the students' mother tongue was banned from the classroom considerably simplified matters for publishing purposes: there was no need for the multiple cross-combinations of languages required in bilingual methods such as those of Ahn and Ollendorff. Berlitz's materials were explicitly designed for *classroom* (as opposed to self-study) use, and textbook production and sales were tied to the cultivation of a captive market within a rapidly expanding chain of language schools. Following initial expansion within the USA, Berlitz turned his attention to Germany, and from there to the rest of Europe. By the 1890s there were around fifty schools: sixteen in the USA, seventeen in Germany, five in Britain, and the rest in France, Hungary, Austria and Holland, while by 1914 there were around two hundred, most (sixty-three) in Germany, and twenty-seven in Britain. By the time of Berlitz's death (in

1921), the Berlitz Organization also had schools in the Middle East, Australia and Latin America (Berlitz Organization 1978).

These developments take us beyond the nineteenth century; indeed, more than any of the other innovators described so far in this section it was Berlitz who had the most direct impact on twentieth century language teaching, particularly in the commercial language school sector. Ultimately, twentieth century emphases — within post-war ELT, for example — on a largely monolingual methodology and the development of oral/aural skills can be seen to owe as much to the Pestalozzian Natural Method tradition which Berlitz successfully extended and propagated as to the concurrent European Reform Movement (see below), even though, as Pakscher (1895) makes clear, the Berlitz approach tended to be seen in academic circles as overly mechanical and superficial. Just as Hamilton, at the beginning of the century, had identified a market for language teaching to adult learners who were unfamiliar with and put off by the grammatical emphasis in traditional approaches, so too Berlitz schools made language learning accessible to relatively uneducated adults with new needs for practical oral/aural proficiency. Pakscher (1895: 317) offers a vivid account of the successes achieved with young sales assistants attending evening classes after work at the Dresden Berlitz School of which he was Director, and thus provides evidence that Berlitz made a significant contribution to late nineteenth and early twentieth century adult education. This was achieved on the basis of a method which was systematic and simple enough to be replicated relatively ‘professionally’ by young (often itinerant) native speaker teachers like Harold Palmer.

The final innovator to be considered here, François Gouin (1831–96) (see Appendix 1.5) was, along with Berlitz, probably the best-known, by name at least, to language teachers in the first half of the twentieth century. Like the members of the ‘Natural Method group’ (including Berlitz), he concentrated on classroom methodology, and emphasized the need for direct connections to be made between experience and the target language, without the intermediary of the mother tongue, although, unlike Berlitz, he did not ban its use. He was similar also to Prendergast in having attempted to base a whole ‘system’ — his ‘Series Method’ — on a partial view of how children acquire their mother tongue.

Gouin describes in his (1880) *L'art d'enseigner et d'étudier les langues* how in the early 1850s he had attempted, and failed, to learn German both by traditional scholastic procedures which he had previously employed to study and to teach Latin and with more innovative methods. Then, however, his young nephew's retrospective account of a visit to a local mill led him to the notion that experience and language can be, indeed — within the child's brain — naturally are organised sequentially, and in tandem. At the same time, Gouin noted the need for an 'incubation period' between reception and reproduction, thus extending Marcel's (1853) insights into the logical primacy of 'impression' over 'expression'.

In pursuit of these revelations, Gouin proceeded once more to study German, developing his own 'series' or sequences of actions according to which he would henceforth memorize new expressions. The success of this approach formed the basis of his 'Series Method', whereby all manner of events are analysed into component actions. These components are presented in sequence within narrative oral and written texts in the foreign language which are later reproduced by the learner. For example, in the very first lesson, the teacher can present and encourage the pupils to reproduce the following sequence in the foreign language, in accompaniment with the stated actions: 'I walk towards the door, I draw near to the door, I draw nearer to the door, I draw still nearer, I come to the door, then I stop at the door' (Gouin 1893: 17–29).

Gouin's ideas found enthusiastic proponents in Britain in the shape of Howard Swan and Victor Bétis, who started their own school based on his method in London. In 1892 they issued their English translation of his major work (*The Art of Teaching and Studying Languages*). Gouin schools were subsequently to spring up in various countries. Although these never rivalled the spread of the Berlitz schools, and were never, it seems, under the control of Gouin himself, his ideas had become well-known by the turn of the century, even more so, paradoxically, in the UK and the USA (see Darian 1972: 55) than in Continental Europe.

As with the Natural Method group (including Berlitz), Gouin had proposed special techniques for *classroom* teaching, with a focus on developing the ability to *speak* that language ('Ce que nous voulons, ce n'est pas traduire, c'est parler')

(Gouin 1886: 72)).³ Although Gouin's own demonstration of his method for the benefit of school teachers (in Gouin 1886) involves a certain amount of exposition in French (for the benefit of his audience as much as for the actual pupils), it is made clear that the class could equally well take place only in the target language, German (Gouin 1886: Appendix, p. ii).

In the interpretation offered by his translators Swan and Bétis, Gouin's approach was often referred to at the turn of the twentieth century as the 'Psychological Method'. Invoked here was a form of associationist psychology comparable to that which informed the Pestalozzian approach of the Natural Method group, but with a focus on processes of language acquisition rather than simply processes of comprehension. According to Swan (1892: viii–ix), 'It is in the recognition of the vast part the imagination — or, to be more accurate, the faculty of visualisation — plays in the learning of languages, as in all mental operations, that the originality and success of M. Gouin's "Series" system depends'. Despite the undoubted originality of Gouin's insights, Findlay (1893: 334) was probably not too wide of the mark in judging him overall as an example (comparable, it might be added, to Hamilton and Prendergast) of:

men of that special order of mind which squares circles and transmutes lead into gold: the one-idea men, endowed with extraordinary strength of will, and with unflagging industry, accompanied by a fatal narrowness of vision which permits them to see nothing but folly in the labors of their precursors, and which magnifies the worth of their own discovery until they believe it to be the one thing needful.

As we have seen in the cases of Prendergast and Gouin (and, with less explicit exposition on their part, in the work of the Natural Method group including Berlitz), appeals to the commonly observable experience of children learning their first language, in other words to various forms of 'natural learning' had become a very common means to sell books and advertise language schools in the latter part of the nineteenth century, being contrasted with less accessible or 'practical' scholastic approaches. As Girard (1884: 81, cited by Puren 1988: 42) felt driven to exclaim,

3 'What we wish [to develop] is not [the ability] to translate but [the ability] to speak'.

‘Naturelle! Les livres, les systèmes les plus divers, les plus opposés se recommandent de cette épithète séduisante’.⁴

In sum, in the second half of the nineteenth century a number of writers emerged with new proposals, which they typically justified with reference to nature, in opposition to the ‘unnatural’ procedures they associated with the standard reliance on a grammar and a dictionary, or with the use of grammar–translation texts. Their specific proposals varied, however, in significant respects, and, being isolated from one another, they did not together constitute a ‘movement’ of any kind. With the exception of Gouin, though not of his popularizers, Swan and Bétis, they were primarily concerned to meet new needs for relatively utilitarian language learning outside formal education. The audience for their ideas were, by and large, adult learners who had been unable to benefit from an elite, classical education but who found themselves with new needs, desires, ambitions and opportunities (increased time and affordability) for gaining practical, particularly oral language skills.

2.2 The Reform Movement

Throughout the nineteenth century, educational prestige in Europe continued to require the teaching of Latin, but modern languages began to gain a foothold in the curriculum of certain schools, along with other practical subjects such as science (Green 1990). Towards the beginning of the century Marcel (1820) wrote eloquently but somewhat over-optimistically in favour of toppling Latin from its position of dominance in British schools, while, more realistically, Jacotot and Hamilton related their proposals to the learning of Latin and Greek as much as to modern languages. Within formal education, practical objectives were not considered paramount and modern language instruction was only just beginning to establish itself. Even so, there was growing dissatisfaction with the apparent failure of pupils to benefit from approaches based on the study of classical languages,

4 ‘Natural! The most diverse and mutually opposed books and systems are advertised with this seductive epithet’.

particularly when that failure was compared with the success of young children in acquiring their mother tongue naturally.

In most schools in the nineteenth century, including, it can safely be assumed, the one attended by Harold Palmer in the 1880s and early 1890s, teachers of modern languages generally emulated procedures used for the teaching of Latin and Greek, with parsing and translation being the most favoured activities. Bahlsen's (1903/1905: 12) memories of studying French in Germany may be considered representative: 'Committing words to memory, translating sentences, drilling in irregular verbs, later memorizing, repeating, and applying grammatical rules with their exceptions, — that was and eternally remained our main occupation'. Several reasons can be adduced for the predominance of what might be termed a 'classics-based' model of modern language teaching in European schools in the nineteenth century (when, that is, modern languages were offered at all as subjects on the curriculum), including the general lack of teachers proficient in the spoken form of the target language, the need to justify modern language study as providing a 'mental discipline' equivalent to the study of Latin and Greek, and increasing demands to prepare students for written examinations. In some countries (notably, England and the USA), a classics-based model continued to dominate until well into the twentieth century.

In the latter half of the century, there was a growing influence on schools of public written examinations with their 'unseen' texts for translation in which anything might turn up. Teachers over-prepared their pupils, and textbooks became increasingly detailed and the lists of exceptions longer and longer. The burden on memory became heavier, and the lessons less and less practical. Also, suspicions persisted that modern language teachers were underqualified (Marcel 1853, I: 194–97). Many language teachers of the time were indeed itinerant native speakers, knowing little if anything about their own language and still less about the mother tongue and culture of their pupils (Handschin (1940: 4–5) and Espagne, Lagier and Werner (1991: 78–79) refer to such problems in the USA and France, respectively). In England, there was also a built-in gender bias, with modern languages being seen as a subject suitable only for girls, a prejudice that the single-sex (male) 'public schools' did nothing to dispel and which still persists to some degree. In sum, modern languages faced an uphill battle for acceptance in the schools. Throughout

Europe, gaining academic respectability entailed adopting the procedures of Latin and Greek teaching, with the inevitable consequence that lessons tended to focus on intricacies of grammar and literary language much more than the development of practical skills.

By the 1880s, however, the status of indigenous (i.e., ‘non-native speaker’) modern language teachers in schools, especially in Germany and Scandinavia, was finally becoming secure enough for them to engage in their own ‘Reform Movement’ (see Howatt 1984: 169–91). To assert its independence from Latin and Greek instruction, modern language teaching needed to develop a convincing theoretical basis of its own, one with sufficient academic respectability to distinguish it from the classics-based model. Such a basis was indeed found, in the developing science of phonetics.

The late nineteenth-century Reform Movement in modern language teaching began dramatically in 1882 with the publication of a short, polemical attack on the excesses of classics-based modern language teaching in German schools (*Der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren!*) by a young teacher of English, Wilhelm Viëtor (1850–1918). Subsequent pan-European cooperation between phoneticians and teachers culminated in the publication of two works by distinguished scholars which signalled the beginnings of an ‘applied linguistic’ approach to language teaching in the twentieth century: *The Practical Study of Languages* (1899) by Henry Sweet (1845–1912) and *How to Teach a Foreign Language* (1901/1904) by Otto Jespersen (1860–1943) (see also Linn (2004: 121–25) on what he terms the ‘Anglo-Scandinavian school of applied linguistics’ whose leaders he identifies as Sweet and Johan Storm (1836–1920)). In the meantime, the movement had benefited from developments in another new science, that of psychology, with *Die praktische Spracherlernung* (1884) by Felix Franke (1860–86) representing one of the first attempts to develop a scientific theory of language learning. Paul Passy (1859–1940), the founder in 1886 of an association of English teachers in France (the ‘Phonetic Teachers’ Association’) which was to grow into the International Phonetic Association (IPA) deserves much of the credit for the propagation of Reform principles in France and Belgium, where Harold Palmer was to begin his career as a language teacher. Passy, who was both a distinguished phonetician and an accomplished teacher himself, personifies the alliance between linguistics

(specifically, phonetics) and language teaching which was the Reform Movement's most durable contribution to the establishment of a modern language teaching profession (see Appendix 2 for an overall chronology of the Reform Movement and Appendix 3 for biographical portraits of Sweet, Viëtor, Jespersen and Passy).

The Reform Movement focused on two main issues: (a) the linguistic content of the syllabus and teaching materials and (b) classroom methodology (Viëtor's (1882) *Der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren!* establishes this dual approach explicitly, being divided into two sections dealing with linguistic and pedagogical concerns, respectively).

In the light of later misunderstandings (see 2.3 below), it is important to be clear about the full range of principles which the Reform Movement originally introduced in opposition to models emulating the teaching of classical languages. Together, these principles contributed to an overall seachange in attitudes in Europe, focusing attention on the problem of how to teach modern European languages (with a particular, though not exclusive focus on English) as *living* languages in schools. These principles, in their strongest form (as introduced by early reformers like Viëtor) included:

- priority of the spoken language, with initial presentation via phonetic symbols;
- elimination of translation out of and (especially) into the target language;
- study of connected texts rather than isolated sentences; and
- inductive teaching of grammar.

These ideas rapidly attracted support across Europe, spurring the development of new professional associations and journals. In turn, the publication in these journals of reports of innovative practice contributed to a greater sense of autonomy and professionalism among modern language teachers, who were thus enabled to emerge from the shadow of classical language teaching. Particularly influential in establishing this new 'esprit de corps' were a number of reports of teaching experience in Germany (including *Ein Jahr Erfahrungen mit der neuen Methode* (1888) by Hermann Klinghardt (1847–1926)) and in Britain (notably *The Teaching of Languages in Schools* (1888) by William Widgery (1856–91)).

On the Continent, it is clear that, from its conception in the minds of a few phonetically (and internationally) inclined scholars and teachers in the early 1880s, the intellectual and political reach of the Reform Movement had spread enormously by the end of the century, when Reform principles became firmly established in national guidelines for modern language teaching in a variety of European countries, including France (see Appendix 2). To establish their dominance in the battle of ideas, the early reform theorists had focused on a shared set of core principles. Inevitably, however, once the intellectual battle began to be won and as reform began to take root in actual practice, the diffusion of ideas was accompanied by some dilution and dissipation of these initial principles. This tendency was clear early on in Germany, where the 'New Method' first began to affect classroom practice: apart from the fact that many otherwise progressively minded teachers remained reluctant to use phonetic transcription as recommended, in particular, by Sweet and Passy, there were various forms of *compromise* between traditional and new ways of teaching, and a so-called 'vermittelnde Methode' ('mixed' or 'compromise' method) emerged in the late 1890s as most dominant. The same phenomenon was observable later in other areas of Europe; in France, for example, it was the 'méthode mixte' which became established most generally in practice in the early years of the twentieth century, despite the government's (1901–02) promotion in theory of the more radical 'méthode directe' (see 2.3 below).

In the eyes of 'radicals', no doubt, the original Reform principles may appear to have been generally diluted in the years preceding the First World War, and Reform was often seen to have failed for this reason, but two alternative interpretations suggest themselves, both of which highlight the continuing influence of the Movement in the first decades of the twentieth century, and indeed down to the present day. Firstly, it can be argued that the establishment of 'moderate reform', including 'vermittelnde Methode' or 'méthode mixte' (as opposed to conservatism and unadulterated grammar–translation) was a clear sign of the Reform Movement's continuing success, as its influence extended beyond a hard core of progressive teachers into the practice of increasing numbers of more 'ordinary' teachers. Secondly, it should be noted that early twentieth-century observers who remarked on a prevalence of compromise were often themselves more 'radical' (for example, in hoping to see full implementation of the

monolingual principle) than had originally been envisaged by the Reform Movement initiators themselves. The internal standards of evaluation may have become higher, in which case this in itself is a sign of the progress rather than decline of the Movement's influence. There may also have been confusion in the minds of some outside observers as to the initially intended nature of school-based Reform, with greater priority being placed in their minds on the monolingual principle (as a result of Berlitz publicity and associated confusions surrounding the meaning of the 'Direct Method' label, the use of which had become prevalent in France, and then Britain and the USA in the first decades of the twentieth century (see 2.3 below)).

It is clear, also, that from the start there were significant *enhancements* of the new approach which were contributed by practitioners themselves, probably the most influential being Klinghardt's (e.g. 1888) advocacy of *Realien*, that is, the provision of information relating to the contemporary social life of the target culture, not, as is commonly assumed today, the illustrations or 'real objects' used to convey this information. As teachers experimented, there was also an inevitable influx of ideas into practice from sources other than the initial Reform theorists (for example, the influence in Germany of Hartmann's *Anschaunngsmethode*, Alge's teaching in Switzerland using 'object lessons', and the ideas of Gouin were all particularly remarked upon by Brebner in her (1898) report). Inevitably, the Reform Movement had opened up possibilities which had not been predicted by its founding theorists, and as it became a practical experiment as opposed to simply a blueprint for change, teachers themselves developed or brought in new and in some cases influential ideas. This tendency should be defined, however, as an 'enrichment' of the Reform's original intentions, rather than as a 'dissipation' of some kind.

Finally, among practitioners, different *emphases* or *tendencies* within the overall Reform approach emerged, giving rise to different 'method labels' as the 'New Method' became better established (and less and less 'new'). One early alternative label was 'phonetic method' (first used by Passy himself), but in Germany different teachers began to claim they were following the 'analytical method', 'direct method' or 'imitative method' in the 1890s. Again, this can be interpreted positively (as a symptom of the Movement's diffusion into practice) as well as negatively (as a sign of dilution or dissipation). Jespersen for one was to

argue (1901/1904: 2) for the more positive interpretation, making a virtue of the plethora of labels which came to be applied, and of the fact that they were associated with mutually consistent principles which had been established by a body of progressive scholars and teachers rather than being associated narrowly with particular founding figures (as was the case, for example, with the more limited and commercial 'Berlitz Method'). The plethora of labels, he says, is due to the fact that 'it is not one thing, but many things that we have to reform, and that is of course the reason why the reformers themselves fall into so many sub-parties' (Jespersen 1901/1904: 3). It needs to be stressed again, then, that these method labels represented different emphases or 'strands' within the initially conceived 'Reform' or 'New' Method (or, as it might be more felicitously termed, 'Approach'). In sum, once the initial intellectual battles had been largely won, there was much debate among teachers over different practical emphases within the overall methodological 'matrix' of the Reform Movement, and this was symptomatic of effective diffusion in practice, not dilution of or dissipation away from Reform Movement ideals. Indeed, in Continental Europe at least, the Reform Movement established a paradigm which provided the boundaries for progressive methodological debate for years to come. This point is clearly made for the French context by Puren (1988: 121), who identifies, within what he terms 'direct methodology', three basic 'methods': 'direct', 'oral' and 'active'. Viewed as emphases, or principles within reformed teaching, these correspond broadly to some of the tendencies which were identified earlier on in the German practitioner debates (see above).

In the UK and the USA, by contrast with Continental Europe, there was very little influence from the Reform Movement on practice, and little experimentation went on in schools (modern language teaching in both Britain and the USA had to wait until the post-World War II era for significant inroads to be made by the spoken language). The insularity this reflected, and the lack of overall interest in foreign languages which has continued to be prevalent in the English-dominant countries generally, goes a long way towards explaining the comparative lack of acknowledgement within post-World War II ELT of the strong continental European traditions of 'progressive' English teaching by non-native speaker teachers in schools (cf. van Essen 1989). Nevertheless, as we shall see in Part II,

certain emphases within the Reform Movement — its emphasis on the description and phonetic representation of spoken language, for example, and the overall concern of writers including Henry Sweet and Otto Jespersen to place language teaching on a principled, scientific footing — were to strongly influence the work of Harold E. Palmer and, through him, the whole field of ELT.

2.3 The Direct Method

In English-speaking countries the term ‘Direct Method’ tends to be employed nowadays to mean ‘using only the target language in the classroom’. This limited conception is reflected and further propagated in one best-selling introduction to teaching methods as follows: ‘the Direct Method has one very basic rule: no translation is allowed’ (Larsen-Freeman 2000: 23). Richards and Rodgers (2001: 12) also affirm that, in the Direct Method, ‘Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language’. However, as will be clarified in this section, the Direct Method emerged originally in the very early years of the twentieth century as a broad language teaching approach, an approach which has become falsely reduced in the English-speaking world to this one, influential principle.

Recently the Direct Method as conceived in this limited way has come under increasing attack, partly because, in the work of Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994, 1998), it is closely associated with, indeed is seen to have derived from, colonial or neocolonial English teaching by ‘native speakers’ (e.g. Pennycook 1998: 157). A lack of appreciation of the ‘non-native speaker’-led Reform Movement roots of ELT in general, and of the Continental European provenance of the Direct Method in particular can be seen to underlie this further misconception.

Like the ‘Communicative Approach’ today, during the first decade of the twentieth century and for some years thereafter the ‘Direct Method’ constituted the paradigm or common reference point in relation to which all ‘progressive’ discussion of language teaching in Europe and the USA was carried on. Just as with the Communicative Approach, indeed, the Direct Method was not originally a monolithic methodology, although the idea that it had a single, monolingual principle became widespread early on, particularly in the UK and the USA. As we

shall see (in Chapter 5), Palmer began to form his own ideas on language teaching under the influence of and in moderate reaction against this one particular Direct Method principle. He only gained an awareness later in his career (see, for example, Palmer and Palmer, D. 1925c: iii–iv) that to be a ‘Direct Methodist’ did not necessarily involve exclusive use of the target language, and could involve other principles. In the early (post-World War II) years of ELT, the kind of approach advocated by Palmer was sometimes called the ‘Direct–Oral method’ (for example, by Hornby), and ‘Direct Method’ was a label attached with pride to one of the first ELT coursebooks, E.V. Gatenby’s (1949–53) *A Direct Method English Course* (see Appendix 8.2). Because of its overall importance in the history and pre-history of ELT, in this section I shall attempt to trace the origins of the Direct Method, define its characteristics, and identify the reasons for some of the misunderstandings associated with it to this day.

The widespread propagation of the term ‘Direct Method’ in the first decade of the twentieth century can, it seems clear, be attributed mainly to a French ministerial circular of 1901 (signed by G. Leygues) which gave strong support to what was called in that document the ‘*méthode directe*’, and to a further directive of 31 May 1902 which imposed this methodology in boys’ schools in France (Puren 1988: 434). Whereas in Germany the year 1882 is generally seen as a watershed (see 2.2 above), in France the ‘*Réforme de 1902*’ constitutes a more widely recognized turning-point. (Puren (1988) ends his chapter on ‘traditional methodology’ and begins a new one on ‘direct methodology’ at this point, for example.)

The contemporary promoters of what Puren (1988: 95) calls ‘direct methodology’ in France did not simply recommend a reduction in the use of the mother tongue in the classroom (nor indeed, unlike Berlitz, did they tend to recommend its banishment). In addition to the principle of directness through avoidance of translation, they argued for the primacy of speech (‘directness’ in the sense of not passing through the intermediary of writing) and advocated the inductive teaching of grammar (‘directness’ in that explicit rules would no longer interfere with learning). Thus, as Puren (1988: 121–67) has shown, there were different principles or tendencies within ‘direct methodology’ in France. In combination with the principle of the connected text (which was argued for by some

but not all the French reformers: cf. Bréal's (1893: 43–53) advocacy of 'phrase-types', or model sentences), and the controversial advocacy of phonetic transcription (supported enthusiastically by Paul Passy but not recommended officially in France until 1908), these principles correspond exactly with the main Reform Movement ideals (see 2.2 above). Thus, the officially recommended French version of Direct Method was at heart the 'Reform Approach' (or 'New Method' as it had been called in Germany) in new clothing. By contrast, it owed relatively little to the 'unacademic' ideas of the Natural Method advocates, Berlitz or Gouin (see 2.1 above); indeed, Puren (1988: 108) speaks of a 'véritable boycott' of Gouin's ideas by language teaching theorists in France at the beginning of the twentieth century, while Maréchal (1972: 389) refers to a similar attitude towards Berlitz among reform-minded Belgian schoolteachers of the same period).

The Reform Movement roots of the Direct Method as this was promulgated at the turn of the century in France can be further clarified with reference to an important 1899 essay by Paul Passy, who had been France's most energetic representative in the overall Movement (see 2.2 above and Appendix 3.4). In this essay (*De la méthode directe dans l'enseignement des langues vivantes*), Passy is careful to distinguish his own suggested interpretation at once from a purely natural method (his approach instead is a 'méthode rationnelle' (p. 8)) and from the work of Gouin, which seems to him to over-emphasize comprehension at the expense of production (footnote, p. 20). He is also at pains to stress that in his conception the mother tongue does not need to be banished entirely from the classroom, thus distinguishing his own ideas from those of Berlitz: 'Il ne serait pas bon de rejeter, absolument et systématiquement, tout recours à la langue maternelle'⁵ (p. 17)). The contributions of translation and explicit grammar teaching are also given their due place. All in all, then, the essay represents a reasoned and balanced argument in favour of a 'direct methodology' which is well-attuned to the realities of school-based language teaching at the elementary level.

The official promotion of 'méthode directe' in turn-of-the-century France was widely noted across the Channel (and across the Atlantic), being misunderstood, however, as exclusively involving conversational use of the target

⁵ It would not be good to reject, absolutely and systematically, all recourse to the mother tongue'.

language in the classroom. To understand the reasons for the reductionism involved here, it is necessary to examine further the relative *lack* of prior influence of the Reform Movement on modern language teaching in Britain and the USA, and the importance given to the ideas of Berlitz and Gouin as compared with in Continental Europe.

In Britain, despite widely cited early contributions to Reform Movement theory by Archibald H. Sayce (1879) and Henry Sweet (1884), awareness of Reform principles remained relatively low in the 1880s and 1890s. Towards the end of the 1880s two teachers in particular, William H. Widgery and W. Stuart MacGowan, did make great efforts to bring Reform principles into Britain from Germany, interpreting them in relation to local conditions and engaging in their own practical experiments (Widgery's (1888) pamphlet was particularly impressive in both respects, and was immediately recognized on the Continent as a significant contribution to the Reform literature). Together, Widgery and MacGowan organised a conference in Cheltenham in 1890 which was probably the first time for British (as opposed to foreign) teachers of modern languages to gather together, and this led on to the establishment of the Modern Language Association in 1892 (see Viëtor 1891). Unfortunately, Widgery had died in the interim, and the nascent movement for Reform in Britain was severely hamstrung by the loss of his intellectual leadership.

However, there were many reasons for the slow progress of the Reform Movement in Britain, not just the loss of Widgery. Mainly it was a question of the continuing low status of the living languages in schools, there being no equivalent of the *Realschulen* in Germany with their 'modern', relatively vocational curricula: grammar schools in Britain tended to imitate the public schools in paying exclusive attention to classical languages. Indeed, there was still very little training available at university level for potential modern language teachers (very little training in particular, of course, in the spoken forms of French or German, and study trips to the Continent were much more difficult to arrange than they are today). Throughout the period (up until the present day, indeed) modern languages were typically seen as subjects 'for girls' (see Bayley 1998). Finally, the continuing dominance of the university-led system of examinations meant that grammar-translation was likely to remain entrenched in schools so long as the exams stayed the same; and this last

factor, combined with the need for enhanced teacher education, partly explains the strong emphasis which was placed on demands for improvements at university level by British reformers (including Sweet). Thus, at the end of his (1888) pamphlet, Widgery calls for reform in the following terms: 'The change must come from the Universities; our hindrance lies in the exaggerated respect paid by the British public to examinations' (p. 58). He goes on:

At present our method in examining for foreign languages is little short of ludicrous; in the great majority of cases the highest honours can be won by the deaf and dumb! Of the four elements of language, hearing, speaking, reading, writing, not a single one is adequately tested. The weight is thrown on translation and the exceptions in the grammar; the former the native speaker never wants, and the latter he absorbs unconsciously. So far can false views on the nature of language mislead us.

(ibid.: 59)

In Britain, despite the attempts of Widgery (1888) and, especially, Sweet (1884, 1899) to establish a principled basis for language teaching methodology, a certain reductionism tended to set in when ideas for reform were discussed: ignorance of the true nature of the Continental school-based reforms was combined with a tendency to associate new methods of teaching with the narrower ideas of Berlitz and Gouin, well-publicized at the time, with the effect that in the early twentieth century 'Direct Method' came, in most people's, including teachers' minds, to symbolise 'conversation lessons', 'teaching through actions' or 'teaching wholly in the target language', and little more.

Indeed, one factor which may have hindered the translation of Reform principles into practice in Britain was the contemporary surge of public interest in the ideas of Berlitz and Gouin from the 1890s onwards and the way this may have distracted attention away from Reform as this was being undertaken in Germany, Scandinavia and, latterly, France. Effective publicity by Howard Swan and Victor Bétis, Gouin's translators, for their interpretation of his 'Series Method' (or, as it came to be called, 'Psychological Method') and, similarly, by the Berlitz chain of schools for their own favoured method (see 2.2 above), seem to have contributed to much misunderstanding of the nature of Reform Movement principles, in particular



following the establishment of the Direct Method by official decree in France, in 1901–02.

The association of Direct Method with the relatively narrow and utilitarian procedures adopted in private language institutes simply exacerbated misunderstandings and resistance to new methods among school teachers in Britain, who were not, as a rule, particularly confident of their own abilities in spoken French or German. Thus, promoters of Reform Movement ideas in Britain in the first two decades of the twentieth century (F.B. Kirkman and Walter Rippmann, for example) found it very hard to get the ‘true’ message of Reform across to other teachers (whereas similar battles against prejudice and misunderstanding had already largely been won by 1890 in Germany).

By the turn of the century, the pace of actual reform in Germany had left countries like the UK behind, and the international unity of purpose which had characterized the Movement’s early years had accordingly been dissipated. Increasing nationalism and concomitant insularity in the years before World War I may also have been factors preventing genuine understanding in the UK of the Continental, in particular the German reforms. Thus, although there is no doubt that the ‘Direct Method’ was widely discussed and promoted (not least, by publishers) in the UK (and the USA) in the years between the turn of the century and World War I, even gaining the apparent allegiance of fair numbers of progressively minded teachers, there was also considerable resistance, strengthened by misconceptions that Direct Method was synonymous with utilitarian and monolingual teaching (‘courier French’ was just one among many terms of disapprobation).

The opposition and reductionism which were involved here are clear targets of Kirkman’s (1906: 204) riposte that there is ‘not one reform method but several – good, bad and indifferent’. He complains that it is the bad or indifferent that are often being held up to ridicule in the UK and argues therefore for improved teacher training. The most prevalent misunderstanding he notes is that speaking should be considered the goal of language instruction, but he stresses, like the early Reformers, that it is to be viewed as the *means* to an end, ‘as part of a general education’ in which reading is important. Direct Method teaching, he stresses, does not have a purely practical aim, as this would be in the province of the ‘technical

institute' (that is, the province of the Berlitz or Gouin schools, for example). Similarly, in the USA, Krause (1916) struggled hard to rescue Reform from reductionism on three fronts, stressing that it is not simply 'psychological' (as in Gouin), phonetic (as promoted by some publishers at the time) or 'direct' in the sense of involving exclusive use of the target language and conversational teaching (as in Berlitz). Back in the UK, Kirkman was still writing in 1925–26 to correct misconceptions that the Direct Method meant 'exclusive use of the mother tongue', but to no avail: 'Direct Method' has now been, probably irretrievably, reduced to this one, single meaning in the English-speaking world.

Gilbert (1954: 15) notes the deleterious long-term effects of this reductionism on the reputation of the late-nineteenth-century reformers in Anglo-American discourse. Thus, he speaks of 'three illusions widely entertained about the early reformers; namely, that their teaching was superficial and not thorough, that they neglected grammar, and that they never used translation and so created confusion in the minds of their pupils'. As he says, 'None of these criticisms is true, at least of the German reformers. Many eyewitness accounts have, moreover, been given of their classroom teaching, all of which testify to its soundness and practical success' (ibid.).

In the UK, then, although the 'Direct Method' enjoyed a certain vogue in theory between 1899 and about 1924 (prompting Krause (1916: 12) in a report originally penned in 1912 in the USA to say 'England, which is so often called conservative, has taken up the reform most energetically'), misunderstandings by its advocates as much as its enemies conspired to prevent its successful adoption in schools: as Hawkins (1981: 133) writes, 'the ferment of new theories left day-to-day teaching in classrooms little changed'. Nor, unlike on the Continent, was Reform ever officially endorsed, indeed a circular of 1912 cited by Hawkins (ibid.: 134) supports the above assessment in its sceptical remarks that although 'the impact of the Direct Method is acknowledged in theory, its principles [. . .] are not always understood'. Seven out of eight schools inspected for this report were seen to be using phonetic transcription (which at last began to enjoy a vogue in British schools in the first two decades of the twentieth century), but the quality of the teachers' work with the texts could hardly be praised.

As we shall see in the next chapter, it was to be in the developing field of teaching *English* as a foreign language that the Direct Method was to gain most British and American adherents in practice, rather than in the context of modern language teaching in schools. As Howatt (1984: 212) emphasizes, overall ELT's 'monolingual approach' has set it apart from foreign language teaching in British schools, reflecting a utilitarian, Berlitz-inspired conception of the Direct Method which has owed little inspiration, apparently, to the Continental European Reform Movement. Nevertheless, it is clear that Harold Palmer himself rejected from very early on the exclusively monolingual prescriptions of Berlitz methodology (see Palmer 1917b: 93), even though he borrowed and further developed many of the active classroom techniques ('object lessons' and so on) as well as the careful grading procedures which he associated with Berlitz (see Palmer 1921b). Although he did come into contact with Reform Movement ideas through reading, Palmer's own initial experiences as a native speaker teacher of adults led him to lay special emphasis on (and critique) versions of Direct Method teaching, namely, practices associated with the Berlitz and Gouin schools, which had not originally been developed for primary or secondary school settings, and which were too limited to be fully 'appropriate' there. As we shall see in Part II, these limitations caused him difficulties, which ELT has continued to face, when called upon to develop innovations for language teaching in school settings overseas.

3 Developments towards ELT

In the last chapter I considered necessary background to Palmer's ideas and post-World War II ELT methodology, in relation to ideas on language teaching which were in circulation at the beginning of the twentieth century. These ideas were generic ones, applicable to the teaching of all modern languages; there was not in existence at that time anything like the UK-based ELT industry which we are familiar with today.

How, then, did ELT arise as a particular enterprise with its own separate discourse? In this chapter I offer further contextualization for the detailed account of Harold E. Palmer's career and overall legacy which will follow in Part II, by surveying developments in the first half of the twentieth century which led to the establishment of ELT in the post-World War II years, and by providing a preliminary indication of Palmer's important role in this overall process.

Howatt (1984: 213) suggests that there were three phases of professional development which provided the methodological basis for ELT: a 'foundation phase' from around the turn of the twentieth century up until Harold Palmer's departure for Japan at the beginning of 1922, followed by a 'research and development phase', and then a 'phase of consolidation' from immediately after the Second World War until around 1960. In this chapter, I summarize my own research into overall developments preceding the establishment of the journal *English Language Teaching* in 1946, an event which can be taken to signal the beginning of ELT as defined in this thesis. I present my findings under three headings: 'Early innovators (c. 1900–early 1920s)' (section 3.1 below), 'Research overseas (early 1920s–mid-1930s)' (section 3.2), and 'Emergence of a UK 'centre' (mid-1930s–1946)' (section 3.3). The first of these corresponds with Howatt's (ibid.) 'foundation phase', while the second two cover his 'research and development phase'. The post-war years up to about 1960 (Howatt's 'phase of consolidation') will be considered in Chapter 10.

3.1 Early innovators (c. 1900–early 1920s)

English had already spread worldwide, via trade, missionary activities, imperial conquest and associated educational practices, by the beginning of the twentieth century, but, as we shall see, an awareness of the specificity of teaching English as a foreign language (as distinct from teaching English as a mother tongue) did not really begin to develop in the UK until the mid-1930s. It is important to recognize, indeed, that before World War II there was no UK-based advocacy of specific EFL teaching approaches comparable to the concerted attempts to spread situational/structural and, later, communicative language teaching in the post-war era.

Rather, as Lawrence Faucett remarked in his (1927a) survey of the teaching of English in Asian countries, there existed a ‘strange carelessness of English-speaking peoples to make simpler for foreigners the learning of English’ (p. 21). At around the same time, Harold Palmer (1928c: 1) similarly complained of a lack of recognition for EFL overseas, in the following manner:

A comparatively unconsidered and comparatively small body of teachers of English [*sic*] or American nationality are engaged in the duty of teaching English to those millions of students to whom English is a foreign language. We pioneers and missionaries of English, working sometimes independently, and sometimes in collaboration with, the native teachers, European or oriental, as the case may be, have our problems, many of which can be understood but imperfectly by those who teach English to those whose mother-tongue is English. For the problems with which we have to deal are different in their very nature from those of the teacher of English to the English.

It was largely through the separate, then concerted efforts of a handful of individual ‘pioneers and missionaries of English’ (Palmer 1928c: 1, cited above) including Percival Wren, Horace Wyatt, and, even more so, Harold Palmer, Michael West and Lawrence Faucett that, by the mid-1930s, consciousness had begun to be raised in the UK and the USA of the specificity and importance of teaching English as a foreign language, and that debates and collaborative work had been undertaken which would inform the construction and expansion of ELT in the post-war era (see Appendix 6 for biographical portraits of these pioneers).

Before the 1930s, few writers from English-speaking countries other than those already mentioned gave serious attention to EFL problems, and up until the early 1920s there was very little innovation in this field indeed. Probably the earliest book by a British writer specifically on problems of English teaching for speakers of other languages was Percival Wren's (1912a) *The "Direct" Teaching of English in Indian Schools* (for more on Wren, see Appendix 6.1). This clearly represents an attempt to introduce to Indian teachers principles which had previously been developed within the late-nineteenth-century Reform Movement, with its focus on modern language teaching by 'non-native speaker' teachers in schools (see Chapter 2). Wren's extensive references to the French Education Department's 'Schedule of Instructions' (in his Chapter V) indicate this lineage clearly. As we have seen (2.3 above), the 'Direct Method', reflecting principles developed over the previous twenty years by phoneticians, university teacher trainers and school teachers across Europe, had been officially recommended in 1901–02 in France, and this had led to heightened discussion of 'modern' methods of language teaching (although not widespread implementation) in the UK and USA in the pre-World War I period.

Colonial educators like Wren, Wyatt and West did not themselves tend to have a strong background in language studies and, as administrators, were primarily focused instead on broader educational issues. As a consequence, their awareness of the wide-ranging debates within the overall Reform paradigm in continental European contexts tended to be rather limited. Nevertheless, as Wren's (1912a) book shows, British educationalists' conception of the Direct Method as applied to modern language teaching in European schools seemed to offer at first the only clear alternative to the 'traditional' language teaching practices they confronted in colonial school settings in the early part of the twentieth century. It was not until 1915–21, with Palmer's work in London, that the teaching of English as a foreign language began to develop a distinctive and authoritative modern-sounding 'voice' of its own.

Paradoxically, indeed, until around 1912 the only major progressive 'centres' of serious interest in teaching English as a foreign language were outside the English-dominant countries, in Copenhagen, for example, where Otto Jespersen was still involved in teacher training, and even as far away as Tokyo, where

Okakura Yoshisaburo was also promoting methods associated with the European Reform Movement via teacher training courses at the Tokyo Higher Normal School (see Okakura 1911; Imura and Takenaka, forthcoming). One limitation of the focus on the roots of (UK-based) ELT adopted in the present study is that the work in these ‘alternative’ centres must necessarily be neglected, although a phenomenon I shall be highlighting is the way Tokyo was also to be the site of the first — and still, in many ways, the most impressive — major research and development initiative for EFL anywhere in the world, the Institute for Research in English Teaching established there by Palmer in 1923.

Unlike other leaders of the Reform Movement (Jespersen in Copenhagen, or Wilhelm Viëtor in Marburg, for example), the British phonetician Henry Sweet had met with obstacles in his academic career and had failed to establish even a centre for the study of phonetics comparable with those in Germany, Scandinavia and France, let alone a centre for the development and diffusion of progressive language teaching methodology. His mantle was to be taken up by Daniel Jones (1881–1967), however, and it was in 1912, the year of Sweet’s death, that Jones founded the first Department of Phonetics at a British university, at University College London (see Collins and Mees 1998). The year 1912 also saw Jones’s first meeting with Palmer, in a crucial ‘brief encounter’ on a ferry from Ostend to Dover (see Chapter 5 below) which was to strongly mark the subsequent history of teaching English as a foreign language.

In 1912, Jones appointed George Noël-Armfield to give a course in Spoken English for foreign students which, as Collins and Mees (1998: 90) note, was ‘the first course to be conducted in a British university in what would today be termed English as a Foreign Language’. This course provided the initial basis on which the University of London became, especially following Jones’s invitation to Palmer to teach part-time at UCL in 1915, the ‘principal if not the sole centre of university-level activity in the field for the next half-century’ (Howatt 1984: 213–14).

Howatt (1984: 212) identifies Palmer’s work at the University of London from 1915 until his departure for Japan in 1922 as catalytic in bringing about the emergence of teaching English as a foreign language as an autonomous activity, but he emphasizes also the contribution of Jones’s own research in theoretical and applied English phonetics. Jones’s (1917) *English Pronouncing Dictionary*, to take

just the most notable applied example, was not intended specifically for foreign learners but immediately proved to be as popular abroad as in the UK. Although presented as a descriptive account of the speech of ‘the families of Southern English persons whose men-folk have been educated at the great public boarding-schools’ (p. viii), its perhaps originally unintended function overseas was to represent a ‘standard’ of pronunciation — PSP (Public School Pronunciation) or, as Jones was to term it in later editions, RP (Received Pronunciation) — which was to be widely taught and imitated (for a recent critique of RP’s subsequent and continuing worldwide hegemony see Jenkins 2000).

Indeed, Jones himself always retained a strong interest in practical applications of phonetics to language teaching, an interest which may have been particularly inspired by Paul Passy (see Collins and Mees 1998: 24). According to Howatt (1984: 214), it was, then, Jones and Palmer together who

effectively ensured that one of the ‘ground rules’ of English as a foreign language was an applied linguistic philosophy, the amalgamation of Jones’s extension of the Sweet–Viëtor tradition in phonetics and Palmer’s experience as a [. . .] teacher and materials writer in Belgium.

The teaching of English was, however, by no means the main pursuit in Jones’s Department of Phonetics. Palmer had himself originally been invited to give a course of public lectures to British modern language teachers, and his first significant statement on problems of language teaching, *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages* (1917b), seems to have been aimed principally at teachers of French. As we shall see (in Chapter 6), during his time in London Palmer increasingly turned his attention to problems of general linguistics and language *learning*, in particular the problems encountered by prospective missionaries studying ‘remote languages’ at the newly founded School of Oriental Studies. He did give one term-long course of lectures on ‘How to teach English to Foreigners’ (in 1917–18), which must have been the first such course at a British university, but his work specifically on the teaching of English as a foreign language was largely confined to self-developmental efforts in connection with his own teaching of Spoken English, and associated materials writing. A lack of clear avenues for significantly influencing modern language teachers via his work in a UK context

may have contributed to his accepting, indeed seeking out an invitation to go to Japan, where he imagined he could engage in research with greater reformist potential. In the UK there were as yet no comparable avenues through which he could directly influence approaches to the teaching of *English* as a foreign language.

3.2 Research overseas (early 1920s–mid-1930s)

In contrast with the early 1920s, when Palmer left London, by the mid-1930s consciousness had begun to be significantly raised within the UK regarding the specificity and importance of teaching English as a foreign language. This development occurred largely as a consequence of individual research and development initiatives carried out in Asia, not within the USA or UK, although the invention and diffusion of C.K. Ogden's Basic English (see below) may have had a bigger influence in furthering this process than has generally tended to be recognized.

Research work specifically focused on problems of teaching English as a foreign language did not get underway until the 1920s, when West, Palmer and Faucett published in relation to their separate experiences in India, Japan and China, respectively. Research by West and Faucett in this decade fed into the development of materials which, while developed originally for particular Asian contexts, became the first 'mass-market' course books for Longmans (West's (1926–27) *New Method Readers*) and Oxford University Press (Faucett's (1933b) *Oxford English Course*), respectively. In the meantime, Palmer was devoting his research efforts in Japan to the development of suggestions and materials for that particular context. (See Appendix 5 for an overview of the parallel careers of Palmer, West and Faucett during the period up to 1936.)

Given recent suggestions that the roots of ELT lie primarily in colonial practices (cf. 1.3.2 above), it is important to note that the contributions of Faucett and, particularly, Palmer were not linked to colonial settings. Nor, as we have seen (in 2.3 above), was the Direct Method, the dominant progressive methodology of the time, originally developed in or for colonial contexts despite suggestions to the

contrary by, among others, Pennycook (1998: 157). As we have also seen, one of the earliest precursors of ELT, Percival Wren, hoped to introduce a Continental European conception of the Direct Method *into* India, but other colonial educators (specifically, Wyatt 1923a, West 1926a) were concerned to indicate how this kind of imposition was inappropriate in the light of perceived needs for recognizing the role of instruction in 'the vernacular' (in Wyatt's case) and for developing, above all, reading skills (in West's). Nevertheless, one strand in pre-World War II developments towards ELT did involve a reinterpretation of English teaching in colonial education (as identified by Howatt (1984: 212)). Indeed, partly due to Wren's pioneering (1912a) work, it was in India that, for the first time, a British discourse specifically on the teaching of *English* as a foreign language can be seen to have developed, a phenomenon to which I therefore devote some attention here.

In place of goals of assimilation of British culture through the medium of English literature, and materials and methods associated with English as a mother tongue instruction in British schools, by the 1920s 'the notion that English was a second language with a utilitarian function in the communication of knowledge' (Howatt 1984: 212) had begun to emerge in Indian contexts. Michael West's experimental work in this decade was particularly important to this transformation, but this had been prefigured by attempts by others in the Indian Education Service (notably, Wren and Wyatt) to introduce more 'rational' procedures than those they saw being used in the schools and school districts for which they were responsible. As indicated above, they were clearly influenced in this by perceptions of the early twentieth-century European discourse on the Direct Method, although Wyatt (1923a), in particular, had much to say about specifically Indian priorities, for example in relation to the need to integrate the use of the vernacular (students' mother tongue, or at least the most widely used mother tongue) into English teaching, and for English teachers to cooperate with teachers of the vernacular as a subject (see Appendix 6.2). Similar concerns motivated West, and his rejection of the oral focus of the Direct Method in favour of reading was based on a close analysis of practicalities and of the needs for 'development' which he identified for the Bengali context (Appendix 6.3).

According to Ganguly and Ramaiah (2000: xvi), the 1920s seem to have represented a turning-point in India to the extent that methods explicitly for the

teaching of English as a foreign language were being discussed to a far greater extent than in previous years, when materials originally designed for British school pupils had been utilized relatively indiscriminately (see Howatt 1984: 212). The timing of this development in India probably owes much to the way English was in the process of being 'reduced' to a subject in the government secondary school curriculum (ceasing, in other words, to be the main medium of instruction). As Ganguly and Ramaiah (2000: xvi) point out, by the 1920s Indian representatives in provincial governments had succeeded in introducing regional medium instruction at the secondary level in government schools (although not in the élite private schools). This brought with it a new awareness among some British colonial educators of a need for techniques of instruction and specially designed materials for learning English as a *foreign* language, in replacement for learning by exposure to English in all subjects and approaches and materials related either to English as a mother tongue instruction or to local traditions of language study.

If we are to understand fully the ideas of colonial educators of the time, and in particular the role Wyatt and West clearly accord to the vernacular, it is important to recognize that much of the present-day discourse on ELT as linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992) cannot be applied in any simple way to contexts of colonial education in the early twentieth century. Indeed, as Brutt-Griffler (2002) has recently indicated, the spread of English into the Empire appears to have occurred in a largely haphazard and uncontrolled manner (cf. Whitehead 1995). What often characterized early twentieth century British colonial thinking (for there was no unified policy, rather an agglomeration of local discussions and practices) was a concern to *contain* or at least *manage* the spread of English, rather, that is, than deliberately spread it further for assimilationist purposes (British colonial education had always differed, and continued to differ from the French approach in this respect). A major factor here was the developing colonialist awareness, particularly in Egypt and India, that there was a connection between the 'unrealistic' aspirations an English medium education could end up promoting and the contemporary growth of anti-colonial agitation; as Brutt-Griffler (2002: 76) remarks, 'British colonial officials tended to translate the connection they perceived between English education and anti-colonial movements into an opposition to English and often "literary" education in general'.

The history of English teaching in the Empire is a vast subject which has hardly begun to be investigated in detail (for a recent study of the Hong Kong context see, however, Evans 2003). Nevertheless, even a minimal recognition of the above factors can help us see that the situation, in India for example, was more complex and variegated than is often admitted. Thus, Pennycook (1994, 1998), who has contributed much, in general, to raising awareness both of this complexity and of the need to take into account the colonial legacy to present-day ELT, seems to overstate his case in the latter domain when he suggests that 'it was in the colonial context of British teachers and their local subjects that the highly influential ELT theories and practices were formed which stressed use of English and only English in the classroom' (Pennycook 1998: 158). As becomes clear when we consider the work of colonial educators such as Wren and Wyatt there were attempts to introduce the (Continental European version of) Direct Method into India through school inspection and the teacher training colleges, but the bulk of actual English teaching in the public school system was done by Indian not British teachers, and Wyatt's suggestions for use of the vernacular recognize this reality. West clearly believed that the (oral) Direct Method was inappropriate in India, although he took on board the suggestion that reading should be taught in a 'direct' manner, that is, unmediated by translation and unhindered by grammatical analysis. The advocacy of more 'efficient' and utilitarian materials and procedures within colonial English education during this period, involving attempts to import and adapt the Direct Method as well as West's more innovative attempts to define appropriate contents and methods of instruction for reading, probably needs to be seen as related to trends of *decreasing* emphasis on English overall, of increasing awareness of needs to control its diffusion, and of an ongoing vernacularization process within public education.

Comparing colonial education 'proper' with practices in private English-medium schools, usually run by missionaries, could help us to understand how 'monolingual teaching' and associated assimilationism operated in the Empire and beyond. However, any influence from these contexts on post-war ELT is likely to have related less to methodology per se than to pervasive *attitudes*, since, apart from the American missionary educator Lawrence Faucett (see Appendix 6.4), none of the obvious precursors of ELT methodology were associated with missionary or

other private English-medium operations. Faucett's work was carried on outside the British Empire, in China and, latterly, in Turkey, and this brings us to a further point — that the British Empire constituted one, but not the only overseas context for the development of the ideas and practices which came to be associated with ELT in the post-World War II era. Thus, while Pennycook (1998: 131) rightly emphasizes that the roots of ELT lie in the history of English teaching in Africa and Asia, not only in the teaching of modern languages in Europe (a point which is not denied by Howatt (1984)), he seems to ascribe too much overall influence to colonial educators. A recognition of the British colonial strand in pre-World War II history needs to be balanced by an acknowledgement of the importance of the contributions of Harold Palmer, whose experience was in EFL rather than ESL teaching (to use the modern acronyms), and who had no direct association with the Empire.

In the absence of a centre in the the UK or USA, it was primarily in Tokyo that the most intensive research work specifically concerned with the teaching of English as a foreign language was carried out during the period, and this was due to Palmer having been invited there in 1921. Although this work was to some extent publicized outside Japan, only certain aspects of it, notably Palmer's contributions to discussions of vocabulary limitation in the 1930s, were widely discussed at the time. Instead, it was Michael West's research into reading (see Appendix 6.3) which seems to have gained most contemporary attention, particularly in the United States, where educationalists were already 'primed' by the dominance of statistical educational research and the increasing support for a 'Reading Method' in modern language instruction to favour the kind of reading-focused experimental research which West offered in *Bilingualism* (1926a). At the same time, the relatively neglected contributions of Lawrence Faucett deserve to be as fully recognized nowadays as they seem to have been by his contemporaries. His (1933b) *Oxford English Course* was gestated over a long period of practical and statistical research work which, while carried out largely in Asian contexts, was recognized by the award of a three-year Carnegie Research Fellowship in 1932 (see Appendix 6.4).

Both Faucett and West had doctorates by 1927 and his lack of one, or indeed of a first degree, may have been one factor underlying the relative international neglect Palmer experienced during his time in Japan, despite his attempts to gain

credibility in the eyes of the American modern language teaching establishment from 1931 onwards. Another factor at play here was undoubtedly the conception of research he favoured from 1924 at least until 1930, that is, research as a practical, context-sensitive activity with an unswerving focus on locally improving methods and materials for English teaching, rather, that is, than research with a deliberately more 'universal' relevance. This continuing orientation to practical, localized research, and the fact that he stayed in Japan considerably longer than his initial three-year contract envisaged reflect the degree of commitment Palmer showed in his mission to improve English teaching in Japan. He never made much money out of his activities; indeed, as shown by his (1934r) pamphlet *The Institute for Research in English Teaching. Its History and Work*, the Institute was poorly funded and any profits made from Palmer's huge output of publications in Japan were channelled back into supporting its survival.

Faucett and West, by contrast, both achieved major international publishing successes on the back of their research work in China/Japan and India, respectively. The extent of West's success as a materials writer initially surprised, indeed troubled him (whereas Faucett seems to have been aiming to succeed as a materials writer from relatively early on in his career), but the careful research work which had gone into the construction of West's (1926–27) *New Method Readers* was not repeated for his follow-up series, the *New Method Conversation Course* (1933b), which he later admitted was 'hurried on', probably for commercial reasons.¹ Nevertheless, Faucett, West and Palmer all started off with a basic commitment to materials writing as an experimental, essentially localized research activity in its own right which was largely lost in the more commercialized post-war world of international ELT publishing.

3.3 Towards a UK 'centre' (mid-1930s–1946)

The isolation from one another of the three major figures in the field (West, Faucett and Palmer) only really ended in 1934–35, when they came together under the

1 Unpublished typescript by Michael West entitled 'The origin of the New Method series', n.d. [1971, according to a reference in the text], in the personal files of Adam West.

auspices of the Carnegie Corporation in New York, then London, to discuss issues of vocabulary control in relation to the teaching of English 'as a world language', in common opposition to the inroads being made by Ogden's 'Basic English' (see below). The year 1936, which saw the publication of their jointly authored *Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection* (Faucett, Palmer, Thorndike and West 1936), the return of Palmer to the UK from Japan and the end of the first year-long training course, under Faucett's coordination, at the University of London Institute of Education, can be seen as an important turning-point in clearly marking the emergence of, to borrow Phillipson's (1992) terms, a 'centre' discourse on teaching English as a foreign language which could be re-exported outwards to 'peripheral' contexts.

Prior to this, however, the first recognizable signs of 'central' recognition of the specificity and importance of English as a foreign language had been shown by publishers, who, as alluded to at the end of the previous section, had come to an awareness of the existence of a specific market for graded materials, as distinct from materials only slightly adapted (if at all) from materials used in the teaching of English as a mother tongue in the UK. Nowadays the export from the UK of EFL teaching and reference materials is a very profitable business, and the major publishers (Longman, Oxford University Press, etc.) are increasingly criticized for their dominance of global markets at the expense of local initiative, for the cultural inappropriateness of book contents and methodology (Alptekin 1993, Canagarajah 1999, Gray 2002), and for their promotion of a hegemonic 'standard English' (Jenkins 2000). The same cannot be said of the pre-World War II period generally, but the foundations of a UK EFL publishing base had been laid during the period covered in the previous section, with West's (1926–27) *New Method Readers* and Faucett's (1933b) *Oxford English Course* constituting the first international English as a foreign language courses, for Longmans and Oxford University Press, respectively.

Given the popularity of West's *New Method Readers* and the way they established Longmans as a pioneer publisher in the EFL field, possibly even 'saving

it from bankruptcy' at the time,² it is instructive to note West's earlier views in *Bilingualism*:

[H.G.] Wells [. . .] raises the [. . .] question whether private enterprise is a suitable means for the production of school textbooks: the present writer agrees with him that it is not. School textbooks might be produced in a special section of the Department of Education in a University, published by the University Press, and the profits devoted to research in education, especially with a view to the improvement of textbooks.

(West 1926a: 305)

He further comments, though, 'But this is Utopian'. In Japan, the Institute for Research in English Teaching established by Palmer persisted for some time in putting into practice an experimental, not-for-profit philosophy of materials development, with the benevolent support of a local publisher, Kaitakusha. However, during the 1930s, not least in relation to West's own work, there was evidence of a growing commercial recognition in the UK of the importance of English as a foreign language materials production, largely at this stage involving the 're-export' around the world of materials and methods originally developed in India, China and Japan. Two striking examples of this 'import-export' process were the employment of Palmer by Longmans following his return to the UK and Longmans' subsequent publication of books by him (Palmer 1938h, 1938i) which refined and popularized work he had done in Tokyo, and, slightly later, the identification by Oxford University Press of Hornby, Gatenby and Wakefield's (1942) Tokyo-published learner's dictionary as a work they would like to re-issue for worldwide export (in rivalry with the first ever English as a foreign language learner's dictionary, published seven years earlier by Longmans, West and Endicott's (1935) *The New Method English Dictionary*). The publishers' focus was mainly on markets overseas; the scope of English teaching to visitors or immigrants to the UK remained small, although demand had increased since the 1920s when refugees began arriving from central Europe. The first proper course for this market (Eckersley's (1938-42) *Essential English for Foreign Students*), the only notable

2 'The origin of the New Method series' (see note above).

exception to the 'import-export process' described above, did not begin to be published until just before World War II (see Appendix 6.5).

Apart from the growth in publishing activity, a second development of the 1930s which had a significant influence within the UK in raising consciousness of the specificity and importance of English as a foreign language was the invention and diffusion of Basic English. As Stein (2002: 16) notes, 'The history of *Basic English* has still to be written', and its impact on the development of English as a foreign language teaching has, for this reason, perhaps not yet been fully recognized (though see Howatt 1984: 250–55). Basic English ('Basic' being an acronym for 'British American Scientific International Commercial') was an ingenious attempt to reduce English to its essentials for purposes of international communication and clarification of thought. The claim of its inventor, Charles Kay Ogden (1889–1957), was that English could be reduced to 850 words (including only sixteen verbs) and a few simple grammatical rules, all of which could be written on one sheet of paper (Ogden 1930).

Basic does not appear to have been established originally as a contribution to the teaching of English as a foreign language, but rather as a kind of international auxiliary language along the lines of Esperanto. However, Basic had supporters in high places, and the interest in it escalated rapidly in the early 1930s, partly through a network of representatives established in particular in China and Japan.³ Thus, although at first sight the advocacy of Basic English as an international auxiliary language might appear to have been peripheral to the field of teaching English as a foreign language, it was increasingly perceived as representing a useful first step to 'full English' in education systems worldwide. Teaching materials and dictionaries began to be produced (being published by Ogden's Orthological Institute in London under the imprint of Kegan Paul), and these directly challenged the relevance of existing international materials based on more conventional limited vocabularies (notably, those by West and Faucett), as well as the more localized materials being developed by Palmer for the Japanese context. In the early 1930s West and Palmer became increasingly concerned about the challenge posed by Basic English, and,

3 According to Stein (2002: 16), 'At the outbreak of the Second World War [Basic] had representatives in more than twenty countries, some 150 books in and about *Basic English* were in print, [and] some of its courses had been translated into Czech, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, and Spanish'.

following his move to Toronto, West published a detailed critique of Ogden's Basic English vocabulary list (West, Swenson, and others 1934) which was broadly supported by Palmer.⁴ This brought forth an immediate point by point rebuttal by Ogden, termed by him a 'counter-offensive' (Ogden 1935), in which he lambasted West, and, to a lesser extent, Palmer, accusing them among other things of deceit, hypocrisy and profit-seeking.

West's increasing advocacy of English as a 'world language' at this time possibly had as much to do with a perceived need to counter the claims being made for Basic English as with heartfelt commitment. In co-opting one of the main premises he associated with Basic, that is, the argument that in the unstable world order of the 1930s English and the English-speaking peoples represented the only hope for continuing enlightenment (West 1933a: 1; cf. West 1934), West's sentiments appeared to be of quite a different order from his earlier advocacy of vernacular 'language rights' in Bengal. By laying emphasis on the world's need for English, West succeeded in gaining Carnegie Corporation sponsorship, both for his critique of Basic English (West, Swenson, and others 1934) and, more importantly, for the 1934–35 conferences on English 'as a world language' in New York and London (see below).

It was, then, primarily the perceived need to respond to the challenge posed by Basic English which led to the important collaboration between West and Palmer, and, in the context of the Carnegie conference, between them and Faucett in the mid-1930s, despite continuing differences on points of methodology between the first two men in particular. This same challenge may have 'forced' West, Palmer and Faucett into a position of appearing to advocate the deliberate spread of ('real') English as a world language. Whatever their true motivations in this regard, the publicity given to the conference meant that attention was focused in a hitherto unparalleled manner on the field of teaching English as a foreign language, and on their own research-based contributions to it.

Ultimately, Basic English failed to dominate the field of English as a foreign language, partly, and paradoxically, due to the 'kiss of death' given by Churchill's

4 Palmer is cited as being in agreement with almost all of the Report's contents, under a note headed 'Authorship' at its beginning.

advocacy of it in the wartime years (see below). However, throughout the 1930s it was widely promoted from the UK outwards, and the opposition to its spread into educational systems overseas which was led by West, Palmer and Faucett served to highlight their own originally more context-sensitive, pedagogically motivated achievements.

As the response to the diffusion of Basic shows, the role of US interests in supporting increased recognition for English as a foreign language in the pre-war British context deserves also to be recognized although it has been relatively neglected in the past. During the period under consideration serious academic attention began to be devoted to modern language teaching in the USA, but the same could not be said for the UK in spite of Palmer's (1917b) pleas for the establishment of a modern language focused 'science of language-study'. The large-scale Modern Foreign Language Study in the USA and Canada which began in 1924 with Carnegie Corporation sponsorship concluded overall in favour of a focus on reading. It was, it seems, on the coat-tails of the admiration committee members felt for West's work that the field of teaching *English* as a foreign language was later, in 1934–36, enabled to establish its own specificity with Carnegie backing, not, that is, due to any sponsorship from within the UK. As mentioned above, North American academics were especially drawn to West's statistically sound experimental approach, since:

The educational world of to-day is governed by the statistical psychologist, who insists that problems must be submitted to experiment in such a way that all factors can be controlled. [. . .] Though the science is new in its application to foreign language study, it is obvious from a consideration of the large body of literature that already exists on the subject, and the growing use of the new methods, that subjective opinion in educational matters is yielding to conclusions reached by objective experimentation.

(American and Canadian Committees on Modern Languages 1928: xi–xiii,
cited by Pennycook 1994: 138)

Pennycook (1994: 139–40) has recognized that Palmer's 'science of language-teaching', as expounded in 1917 and, as we shall see, put into practice in Japan between 1923 and at least 1930, was relatively non-applicationist in inspiration, placing 'emphasis on how to conduct research in order to rationalize a range of

pedagogical decisions' (ibid.); remaining close, that is, to the need to solve problems in specific pedagogical contexts rather than seeking to abstract from them for purposes of maintaining higher academic authority. The positivistic 'scientism' favoured in the US educational world was to prevail over Palmer's conception even more widely in the post-war era when the new field of applied linguistics was established which placed the linguist (replacing the educational psychologist) at the top of a pyramid with the teacher at its base. This development was in the future, however. What both Palmer and West found congenial when they (separately) visited the USA in 1931 was the seriousness accorded there to modern language teaching compared with in the UK, and, just as importantly, perhaps, the serious money which was being devoted by philanthropic foundations to problems of modern language teaching. While Palmer had been tempted to seek work in the USA as early as 1931–32,⁵ it was West who was offered a post in Canada in 1933, and he who, while there, secured financial backing from the Carnegie Corporation both for his critique of Basic English (West, Swenson, and others 1934) and for the 1934 Conference on 'English as a World Language' which brought together Palmer, Faucett, West and the major American statistical lexicologists (see Appendix 7).

While Phillipson (1992) has noted the involvement of American philanthropic foundations in the promotion of English in the post-World War II years, this kind of involvement actually began in the pre-war years and contributed greatly to the 'centralization' process which led to the establishment of ELT. As I have already noted, indeed, the Carnegie-sponsored Conference on 'English as a world language' in 1934 marked a significant turning-point in bringing West, Palmer and Faucett together for the first time, and in establishing a consciousness that the teaching of English as a foreign language was a serious pedagogical enterprise with its own separate identity. During 1934 and 1935 the three men collaborated to produce the *Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection* (Faucett et al. 1936) which contributed a further dimension to the standardization of English as a foreign language which had been characteristic of the period overall (cf. Jones's (1917) *English Pronouncing Dictionary*, Palmer's (1924b) *A Grammar of Spoken English* and West and Endicott's (1935) *The New Method English Dictionary*). The

5 According to entries in an unpublished, handwritten 'News-letter' he wrote for friends and family during his 1931–32 visit to the USA (in the personal files of Victoria Angela).

original interests in vocabulary control of the three men grew out of their materials writing activity, and as, in West's and Faucett's cases in particular, these interests became increasingly tied to commercial imperatives, there may have been a degree of self-interest in their efforts to come up with an alternative to Basic. However, they were also motivated by a sincere commitment to practical teaching problems (as opposed to what they must have perceived as the top-down theory-driven approach of Ogden, a Cambridge philosopher and linguist with no obvious awareness of educational problems overseas).

At the same time, in creating an alternative to Basic, the Carnegie conference participants seem to have been to some extent 'forced' to adopt much of the discourse associated with Basic, including its advocacy of English as a 'world language'. This set the stage for the 'Empire-building' which, from a critical perspective, can be associated with post-war ELT (Phillipson 1992), while Ogden's successful establishment of a network of representatives around the world had shown for the first time, perhaps, the significant role English as a foreign language could play in 'cultural diplomacy' of the kind the British Council was to become increasingly involved with in the immediate pre-war, wartime and post-war years (see below).

A final development towards centralization in the mid-1930s which should be noted concerns the establishment of the first year-long teacher training course for EFL in the UK, within the new Carnegie-sponsored Department of Colonial Education at the Institute of Education in London, in 1935–36. Again, Faucett, an American, and the New York Carnegie Corporation were at the heart of this development, providing further reasons for a greater recognition to be awarded than has been in the past to the interplay between UK and US interests in the establishment of a British (sense of) 'centre' for the teaching of English as a foreign language.

By the end of 1936, the Institute of Education also had a new Director in the person of Fred Clarke (1880–1952), who had himself been present at the 1934 Carnegie Conference in New York and who had subsequently come to the Institute (from McGill University, Canada) under the 1934–37 Carnegie grant. By this time, it is clear, there were the beginnings of an awareness in London (and New York) that a worldwide English as a foreign language 'problem' existed, and that

‘something should be done’ about it. Thus, in November 1936 Clarke wrote to the President of the Carnegie Corporation as follows:

I personally am troubled by the vast scope of the problems of English-teaching with which we are now in contact. I feel that anything we can do here, even at best, is no more than a mouse nibbling at a mountain. It will be something if we can take the measure of the thing, and something still more if we can get influential people in England to appreciate our estimate.⁶

To another correspondent he wrote:

I hope that before long we shall be able to report some development here in respect of provision for the study of teaching English to foreign people. The provision in London, at the moment, compared with the immensity of the field, is pitiable in its smallness.⁷

Interestingly, indeed, it seems to have been mainly a combination of Carnegie sponsorship, Faucett’s success in teaching the first year-long teacher training course at the Institute in 1935–36 and the efforts of Fred Clarke, all of them representing ‘winds of change’ from North America, that forced a recognition of the need for placing English as a foreign language teacher training on a firmer foundation in pre-war Britain. (The British Council, founded in 1934, only started to become involved around 1938–39.) However, just before the beginning of the 1936–37 academic session, Faucett fell seriously ill, and he was unable to return to his teaching duties at the Institute. Instead, a series of guest lectures was arranged, and at the end of 1937 a ‘Department of the Teaching of English as a Foreign Tongue’ was referred to for the first time in official Institute literature.⁸ With effect from 1937–38, a new Division of English Teaching was created, with Percival Gurrey at its head (Anon. 1937). Soon, the same Division, which was to be the base for the leading role the Institute took in promoting ELT professionalism in the post-World War II era, was

6 Fred Clarke [Director of the Institute of Education] to Dr. F.P. Keppel [President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York], 13 November 1936, in Carnegie file, Institute of Education Archive.

7 Clarke to Lt. Col. Sir James Barrett, 24 November 1936, in Carnegie file, Institute of Education Archive.

8 *University of London Institute of Education Annual Report, 1936–7*, p. 12, in Annual Reports file, Institute of Education Archive.

redesignated as a 'Department of English as a Foreign Language', and by 1938–39 the British Council was said to be 'actively interested'. Gurrey had visited Hungary and Rumania during this session as a British Council representative, and the Council was due to send some of its scholars to the Institute in the following session as 'special students' in the field of teaching English as a foreign language.⁹

Just prior to the outbreak of war, then, the British Council, itself established in 1934–35, had begun to take a serious interest in problems of EFL teaching in the regions it was mainly focused on, that is the Near East, the Balkans, the Baltic, Portugal and South America. It was primarily under its third Chairman, Lord Lloyd, from 1937 to 1941, that the Council expanded its activities in these regions, with Lloyd's major preoccupation being 'to increase British influence in areas vital to her interests in the event of war', in response to Fascist cultural penetration in the same areas (Donaldson 1984: 55). Major British Council activities at this point consisted in the support of existing British Institutes (in Florence, Paris, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Montevideo) and the use of these as models for establishing further Institutes, for example in Athens, Bucarest, Malta, Cairo, Alexandria and Lisbon (Donaldson 1984: 60). By 1940 the Council had established around twenty-five British Institutes in areas of strategic importance and was 'continuously in touch with' over 200 Anglophile Societies throughout the world, providing lecturers, books, newspapers, gramophone records and miscellaneous information and taking an active role in selecting or providing teachers of English for them (British Council 1940: 4). The Council had also begun to establish the links with British publishers which were to underpin 'centre' to 'periphery' ELT exports in the post-war era (ibid.: 8). As yet, there was only one overseas office, that in Cairo, which oversaw all activity in the Near and Middle East, but the regional organisation in Turkey was also said to be strong (ibid.: 19). As we shall see (in Chapter 10 below), it was into this developing professional framework that A.S. Hornby (1898–1978) was to be incorporated following his return from Japan in 1942, first as a teacher trainer in Iran, then in the influential position of 'linguistic adviser' to the Council in London after the war had ended. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that, despite these developments, the British Council — such an

9 *University of London Institute of Education Annual Report, 1937–8*, in Annual Reports file, Institute of Education Archive.

important pillar of ELT in the post-war years — largely confined its pre-war and wartime efforts in the English as a foreign language field to its own and affiliated British Institutes.

During World War II, the teaching of English as a foreign language began to receive increased attention in high places. In his famous ‘empires of the mind’ speech in acceptance of an honorary degree at Harvard University in 1943 (reported in the 7 September issue of *The New York Times*), Winston Churchill praised Ogden’s Basic English, and in 1944 a White Paper recommended its promotion by British government agencies abroad.

It is significant, however, that neither the BBC nor the British Council was overly affected by the push for official recognition of Basic English which had been instigated by Churchill, although the White Paper of 1944 seemed to predict a Basic English-dominated post-war era. Indeed, given Hornby’s frequently stated opposition to Basic English during his time in Japan, and his association with Palmer, one of Ogden’s main ‘enemies’, Hornby’s appointment as ‘linguistic adviser’ to the Council in 1946 indicates the extent to which the British Council was willing and able to resist political pressure to promote Basic.

It was in his position as linguistic adviser to the Council that Hornby founded the journal *English Language Teaching* in 1946, an event which can be seen to mark the beginnings of ELT as an established pursuit, profession or ‘discipline’ (indeed, as I have noted in 1.2 above, it was the title of this journal which gave rise to later widespread use of the acronym ELT). Hornby was also to be centrally involved in a further development out of the wartime years, BBC ‘English by Radio’ programmes. As we shall see in Chapter 10, these were to form, together with UK-based publishers, Institute of Education teacher training and British Council activities, a major pillar of post-war ELT.

Up until this post-war point, in particular prior to the mid-1930s, the relative lack of coordination and, as Clarke (cited above) put it, the ‘smallness’ of British efforts to address problems of teaching English as a foreign language abroad should not be disregarded. Nor, however (as I shall have cause to re-emphasize in Chapter 10), should the subsequent influence of these efforts. The work of Harold E. Palmer was to represent a particularly strong influence on the methodological orthodoxy

which was established in the post-war years, and it is to his career and legacy that we now turn.

Part II

Palmer’s career and legacy

4.1 Family and education

Harold Edward Palmer was born on 6 March 1877, at 63 Wornington Road in North Kensington, London.¹ He was the first and only son of Edward Palmer, a twenty-two or three year old ‘schoolmaster’ at the time of Harold’s birth, and Minnie (née Frostick), aged nineteen or twenty.² Edward Palmer had himself been born and brought up in Hythe,³ a small seaside resort town near Folkestone in Kent, where his own father was a respected figure in the local community, formerly headmaster of the local elementary school, and now (following his retirement in 1875) a School Inspector and Registrar of Births and Deaths.⁴

Harold’s father maintained a lifelong practical interest in French and other languages, and he appears to have left Hythe at least partly with the intention of furthering his studies (the title page of a pocket-sized language-learning manual he published much later (Palmer, E. 1914) seems to indicate that he gained a London Chamber of Commerce diploma in French around the time of Harold’s birth).⁵ However, he did not attend university, nor was he later to encourage his son to do so. According to the 1881 census, Edward Palmer was ‘certificated’ as a teacher,⁶

1 Birth certificate for Harold Edward Palmer, Family Records Centre, London. Overall, the information in this chapter derives from research based on primary sources including letters and other documents in the personal files of Palmer’s great-granddaughter, Victoria Angela (henceforth, PFVA), back issues of *The Hythe Reporter* (consulted in the Colindale Newspaper Library, London, and Folkestone Library), documents in the Family Records Centre, London, and a curriculum vitae transcribed in Kuroda (1985). Further information was provided by Ms. Denise Rayner of the Hythe Civic Society. My main secondary source is Anderson (1969).

2 The 1881 census entry for 37 Harvest (?) / Harvey (?) Road, Islington lists the ages of Edward and Minnie as 27 and 23, respectively, while a family tree in PFVA records their years of birth as 1853 and 1857, respectively.

3 1881 census entry (see note above).

4 Obituary, *The Hythe Reporter*, 8 June 1912.

5 The assumption is made here that, having been awarded in London, this diploma was gained at least prior to 1883, in which year Edward moved with his wife and son to Hythe, and probably between 1877 and 1881, since the 1881 census refers to his being a ‘certificated’ teacher, whereas the 1877 birth certificate refers only to his being a ‘schoolmaster’.

6 1881 census entry.

and it seems that he had previously taught in his father's and other schools around Hythe, from the age of fourteen.⁷ However, he was of an entrepreneurial disposition, and in 1882–83 he appears to have been organizing classes in French and other languages, partly for adults, in the house he, his wife and young son had moved to in Islington. Harold's mother, who was to cultivate in her son a 'love of many forms of art' (Anderson 1969: 135) may have contributed lessons in singing and drawing.⁸

When Harold was five, he entered an elementary school in London but the family moved to Hythe in 1883.⁹ Edward Palmer at first organized a new school there, then (perhaps additionally) started up a stationery and fancy goods shop at 129, High Street.¹⁰

In 1889 Harold's only sibling, Dorothy, was born, twelve years his junior.¹¹ The following year Edward Palmer launched a local weekly newspaper, *The Hythe Reporter*, which he edited and published himself, at the same time or soon afterwards giving up teaching completely to concentrate on this and his other non-educational business interests (Anderson 1969: 135).¹²

Harold seems to have left elementary school in Hythe in 1887, at the age of ten.¹³ For three years he was taught at home (perhaps mainly or exclusively by his

7 For this information I am grateful to Denise Rayner of the Hythe Civic Society, who has had access to local school log books. Further details relating to Edward Palmer (Harold's father) are to be found in an obituary in *The Hythe Reporter*, 8 October 1927.

8 Printed flyer advertising classes beginning in January 1883, in PFVA.

9 These details are from the curriculum vitae (written in Japanese) in Tsukuba University archives which is transcribed in Kuroda 1985. Henceforth (in the present chapter), I shall refer to this as 'CVTU'. The curriculum vitae was presumably prepared by Palmer during his time in Japan as a requirement for teaching at the Tokyo Higher Normal School, predecessor of Tsukuba University.

10 Anderson (1969: 135) suggests that a school was set up; that this was operated concurrently with a shop is suggested by a letter in PFVA from Harold Palmer to 'Niçean' (undated but in childish hand, suggesting c. 1883): 'To day [*sic*] Papa has gone to Boulogne and as he has gone with a lot of other schoolmasters I could not go. We have rigged [?] a bell in the shop on the door and it rings splendidly when anybody comes in'.

11 Birth entry for Dorothy Irene D. Palmer, Family Records Centre, London.

12 In the 1891 census entry for 129 High Street, Hythe, Edward Palmer described his occupation as 'stationer, fancy warehouseman, newspaper proprietor', with no mention being made of school teaching.

13 CVTU. I have found no evidence either to confirm or contradict this information.

father and mother).¹⁴ Then, from 1890 to 1892, he studied as a 'day scholar' at a small private institution very near his home, Prospect House School, which had been set up by Bertram T. Winnifrith, a graduate of Oriel College, Oxford.¹⁵ A school report for Easter 1892,¹⁶ in which year Harold left the school, shows that he was first in his (small) class in examinations for Divinity, English Language, French, Euclid, History, Geography and Reading, and first overall in Division I, presumably the last year of the school. In other subjects on the curriculum (Latin, Algebra, Writing, Drawing, Mapping, Dictation and Book-keeping), he placed second or third in examinations.

Harold must have felt in several minds about his future at this time. While the principal and other teachers at Prospect House School were Oxford graduates, and the school itself more up-market, apparently, than Edward Palmer's own educational ventures, it advertised itself only in the following rather modest terms: 'Pupils successfully prepared for public examinations. [. . .] Highest references to Clergy and others in all parts of England'.¹⁷ Harold seems to have been approached about the possibility of his seeking ordination, but he is said to have shown no interest, despite his high examination score for Divinity (Anderson 1969: 135).

He may instead have been aware that he was predestined, one day, to take over his father's thriving small business. By now, this had expanded into areas such as book-selling, book-lending, sheet music-selling, general printing and book-binding, in addition to fancy goods, stationery, and newspaper printing and publication.¹⁸ Harold, then, was not to be prepared for university (as his daughter

14 CVTU. No mention is made of the identity of Palmer's home tutor(s) in this source, but it seems reasonable to assume that Harold received instruction in academic subjects from his father (as is suggested by Jones 1950b: 4) and/or any other teachers employed in his father's school, and in drawing and music from his mother.

15 Details of duration of study at this school are from CVTU. Harold is described as a 'day scholar' on a school report for Easter 1892 in PFVA. Details of Bertram T. Winnifrith come from an advertisement in *The Hythe Reporter*, 1 January 1898.

16 Document in PFVA, also described, in less detail, by Anderson (1969: 135).

17 *The Hythe Reporter*, 23 January 1897.

18 'Hythe Tradesmen's Directory', in *The Hythe Reporter*, 26 December 1891.

later suggested he himself might have wished (Anderson 1969: 135)) but instead sent on a six-month exchange visit to Boulogne.¹⁹

4.2 Late-teenage years

In September 1892 (at the age of fifteen), Harold was accompanied across the English Channel by his mother, who then left him in the care of the Dié family (themselves involved in a small high street business in Boulogne, involving the rapid delivery of letters and parcels). René Dié, a boy of about Harold's age, made the return trip and stayed at the Palmers' in Hythe.²⁰ Harold appears to have appreciated the freedom, saying in one of his earliest letters to his mother (to whom he wrote weekly), 'I am glad Papa c'ant [*sic*] see and hear me'.²¹

Harold came back to Hythe for Christmas, and, at the end of March 1893, returned home for good,²² presumably with improved abilities in French, although it seems that for the most part, rather than engaging in serious language study, he had pursued his interests in fossils, geology, map-making and photography²³ (interests which were to remain with him throughout his life). Anderson (1969: 135) writes

19 Letters written to his mother at the end of September 1892 (in PFVA), indicate that Harold had just arrived in Boulogne. See note 22 below regarding the date of his return to England.

20 Most of these details come from letters Harold wrote to his mother from 12 Grande Rue, Boulogne, on 28 and 29 September, 1892, in PFVA. Information about M. Dié comes from rubber stamps on the back of an envelope addressed by Harold to his mother, postmarked '7 Dec 92'. The stamp reads as follows: 'FACTEURS RAPIDES; C. DIÉ, Directeur; 12, Grande Rue, 12; BOULOGNE s/M; Distribution de Lettres de Décès'. On the exchange nature of Harold's visit, a letter from Boulogne to his mother dated '30th November' [1892] contains the following message: 'M. Dié will not call for René but visit him about February & perhaps take him to London & he suggests that papa will come here and take me to Paris'.

21 Postscript (dated '29 Sept') to a 28 September 1892 letter to his mother, in PFVA.

22 A letter to his mother dated '30th November' ends with the words, 'I remain till the 20th of the month which commences tomorrow in Boulogne loving you Harold' (i.e. he expected to return to Hythe on 20 December). A letter in a bottle which 'was thrown into the English channel, midway between Folkestone & Boulogne, the 11th January 1893, [. . .] by H.E. Palmer' was later returned to him. This dates the second journey to Boulogne, while a similarly bottled and returned letter dated 'the 30th March 1893' appears to date the final return to England.

23 These pursuits are all mentioned in letters and/or evidenced by documents (maps and drawings) in PFVA. CVTU states that Palmer studied at the 'Institut Ducrosset' (a possible spelling only, since the original is in Japanese) during his stay in Boulogne. However, Harold's letters to his mother (in PFVA) make no mention of any formal language study.

also that ‘most of his time was spent in the Art Gallery sketching and painting in oils’. There he had made the acquaintance of an Englishman, A. Beaumont, who had expressed some admiration of his artistic talents.²⁴

On his return to England, Harold corresponded with Beaumont regarding the possibility of gaining an introduction to museum work, for example in the area of geology.²⁵ However, it is apparent that nothing in the way of concrete employment came from this correspondence. Harold seems to have spent his remaining teenage years in Hythe, perhaps helping his father with printing and bookbinding work, and probably writing short, unsigned pieces for *The Hythe Reporter* (Jones 1950b: 4), although sometimes he set off with a rucksack on long bicycle trips, in search of fossils (Anderson 1969: 136). At around the same time, he was earning extra money from another talent (inherited from and probably cultivated by his mother, who was a popular music-lover herself),²⁶ as the following advertisement makes clear:

Harold E. Palmer
Pianist
129, High Street, Hythe.
Open to Engagements at Dances or as
Accompanist at Smoking Concerts, Entertainments, &c.
Quadrille Band Provided.²⁷

4.3 Journalism

On Harold’s twentieth birthday, 6 March 1897, the time appears to have come for him to play a more active and responsible role in assisting his father, whose

24 Letter to his mother, dated ‘30th November’ [1892], in PFVA.

25 Letters from A. Beaumont to Harold Palmer, 30 August 1893 and 8 September 1893, and undated draft of a letter from Harold Palmer to Beaumont requesting a letter of introduction, all in PFVA.

26 *The Hythe Reporter* contains several reports of local performances of songs from comic operas in which Minnie took part, as well as indicating that Harold worked as an accompanist at local events such as the annual dinners of the Hythe Fire Brigade and the Hythe and Seabrook Cottage Gardeners’ Society (e.g. *The Hythe Reporter*, 16 January 1897).

27 *The Hythe Reporter*, 1 January 1898.

occupational interests had by now expanded still further to include 'Bill Poster and Advertisement Contractor', 'Newsagent', and 'Marquee and Tent Proprietor'.²⁸ On this date appeared the first full-length article to be written by Harold for *The Hythe Reporter*, under the prominent headline 'Greece and Crete!!', and containing several other dramatic sub-headings uncharacteristic of the hitherto rather restrained graphical conventions of the newspaper.²⁹ This article reports a meeting called locally to protest Britain's support of the Ottomans against Crete, and is written in lampooning style, gently poking fun at the self-righteousness of some of the speakers, including the newspaper's proprietor, Harold's own father: 'Mr. E. Palmer, jun. [. . .] was somewhat carried away by his deep feelings on the subject, and some of the audience resented his reference to the absence of Conservatives' (ibid.).

Like his own father ('Edward Palmer, senior'), Edward junior was a committed Liberal, devoted to Gladstone,³⁰ and an active member of both the local Liberal and Radical club and the Hythe Ratepayers' Association.³¹ He was also something of a campaigner, having set up, via *The Hythe Reporter*, subscription lists for causes including striking Welsh miners (to whose fund Harold had also contributed) and India relief (both in 1897),³² and having argued in various earlier editorials in favour of, for example, Home Rule,³³ nationalization of mines,³⁴ and the building of a Channel Tunnel.³⁵ Harold's father had himself called the above-mentioned 'indignation meeting' in support of the Cretans against the Turks,³⁶ and

28 Advertisements in *The Hythe Reporter*, 13 February 1897.

29 Although the author is not named, subsequent articles in similar style which are attributed lead me to conclude that this article is almost certainly by Harold Palmer. In a disclaimer in the subsequent (13 March) issue, Edward Palmer indicates that the article had not been his own, and that he had given the writer (whose anonymity is still preserved) a free rein.

30 *The Hythe Reporter*, 21 May 1898.

31 *The Hythe Reporter*, 25 October 1890.

32 *The Hythe Reporter*, 6 February 1897.

33 *The Hythe Reporter*, 6 December 1890.

34 *The Hythe Reporter*, 30 January 1897.

35 *The Hythe Reporter*, 6 December 1890.

36 *The Hythe Reporter*, 6 March 1897.

conflict of interest may have been one factor in his giving his son free rein to report on the meeting. Harold, though, seems to have temporarily failed the test, at least in his father's eyes, and was kept off 'serious' topics for some time. Instead, a 'Cycling Gossip' column began to appear in his name from 1 May 1897 onwards, detailing tours in the Kent region.

From January 1898, however, Harold's talents as a satirical writer began to be better acknowledged and utilized in the pages of *The Hythe Reporter*. Under the pen-name 'Jobbins Z. Jobbins' (a homage, perhaps, to Jerome K. Jerome), he was to write numerous witty pieces and parodies over the ensuing four years, most notably a series of special Christmas supplements in the form of extended verse dramas satirizing the pomposity of the Hythe town council.³⁷

A major step for Harold occurred when his father transferred the editorship of the newspaper to him in February 1899.³⁸ The sobriquet 'Messrs. E. Palmer and Son' had already been applied to the overall business operation in 1898,³⁹ and the regional coverage of the newspaper was now to be expanded. One of Harold's first editorials, concerned with the impending 1 March General Election, shows at once a more serious attitude towards national issues than had been evident in his previous satires on local affairs and a suspicion of party politics quite distinct from his father's committed Liberalism:

Our views: We may be truthfully called independent, but even that word has many meanings attached. There is apathetic independence; there is the 'between two stool' [sic] or 'wobbly' independence. Then there is the 'third opinion' independence. We incline to think that ours is of this type [. . .] We are not necessarily 'ists' nor are our opinions 'isms' [. . .] Party Politics: Oh, party politics! [. . .] You have made most of us believe that we cannot do without you.⁴⁰

37 For example, 'A New and Original Christmas Pantomime in Three Acts, entitled: THE CORPORATION OF SPOOKLAND: Or the Victory of Harmony over the Demons of Discord [. . .] Dedicated to the Mayor and Corporation of Hythe without kind permission' (Supplement to *The Hythe Reporter*, 17 December 1898).

38 On 9 February 1899, the first issue of the *Folkestone, Hythe, Sandgate and Cheriton Reporter and Visitors' List* appeared, with Harold E. Palmer listed as sole editor, and the proprietors indicated as 'E. Palmer and Son'. This new organ, an amalgamation of *The Hythe Reporter* and *The Folkestone Visitors' List* had an office in Folkestone as well as one in Hythe.

39 Cf. advertisement in *The Hythe Reporter*, 18 June 1898.

40 *Folkestone, Hythe, Sandgate and Cheriton Reporter and Visitors' List*, 23 February 1899.

Harold's more serious side had also gained expression in articles written in 1898 on 'The Water Question', in other words the issue of where the Town Council should sink a well. On this local topic, presumably since it engaged his interests in geology, Harold produced some rather scholarly (as opposed to satirical) writing complete with references to a book previously recommended to him by Beaumont as well as to articles in the journal *Nature*.⁴¹

In addition to his scholarly (geological) interests, Harold's artistic talents were engaged, although to a similarly limited extent, in his work for his father. For example, in 1898 Messrs. E. Palmer & Son published a 'series of artistic photos' entitled 'Picturesque Hythe' and presumably produced by Harold, while in September 1901 an illustrated supplement appeared (*Hythe, Past and Present*) which he wholly illustrated in his own hand as well as wrote.⁴²

However, on 21 September 1901 Harold Palmer said farewell to his local readership with a prominently displayed valedictory poem by Jobbins.⁴³ Reasons are not given in *The Hythe Reporter* for his resignation, but there is no reason to doubt that his daughter was referring to 'insider information' when she wrote as follows:

Although Father found life to be full of interest and excitement, he felt that he must break away from work that was leading nowhere. So, in his mid-twenties, feeling cramped and frustrated, he had the urge to go abroad.

(Anderson 1969: 136)

Another perspective is provided by Jobbins himself in 'An interview with Jobbins Z. Jobbins' by Jobbins Z. Jobbins, which had appeared in *The Hythe Reporter* of 24 December 1898:

41 *The Hythe Reporter*, 22 January 1898; 31 December 1898.

42 Harold comments on his enthusiasm for photography in *The Hythe Reporter*, 16 April 1898, and 18 June 1898. The 'Picturesque Hythe' photographs were first advertised in *The Hythe Reporter* of 18 June 1898. *Hythe, Past and Present* was issued as a supplement to the 21 September 1901 issue (on 19 June 1900 *The Hythe Reporter* had been established 'in its old familiar form', with 'Harold E. Palmer (Jobbins Z. Jobbins)' as editor).

I take a great interest in all the Arts and Sciences, and have a practical acquaintanceship with Astronomy, Microscopy, Geology, Botany, Palaeontology, Biology, Mathematics, and Logic. I also pass some time in the pursuit of Art, by the medium of photography, painting, chalk, and pen drawing. But it is in Philosophy that I find myself in my element. I belong to no school of Philosophy. I have studied every school and have read every writer, but being dissatisfied, have written my own: 'The Philosophy of Jobbins'.

Harold Palmer must have felt that his energies and abilities were being wasted in Hythe, where he had been helping his father as responsibly as he could, allowing himself, or being allowed only occasional flights of fancy via a witty and wise alter ego, Jobbins Z. Jobbins, rather, that is, than developing his very own Palmerian Philosophy or Vision! The above interview concludes in the following manner: 'And so I bade farewell to this learned man, this philosopher, poet and journalist; this author, scientist, and artist; this linguist, cosmopolitan and benefactor, and yet withal a simple kindly man'.⁴⁴ Uncannily, this was indeed to become, in most respects, a fitting epitaph for Palmer,⁴⁵ but in order to gain these accolades in reality as opposed to imaginatively he would first have to leave Hythe behind, and start making his own way in the world.

43 *The Hythe Reporter*, 21 September 1901.

44 *The Hythe Reporter*, 24 December 1898.

45 The title of one obituary of Palmer (Stier 1950) was to be 'Harold E. Palmer, Phonetician, Entertainer, Philosopher, Scholar, Teacher, Traveller, Author, Friend'.

5 Experiments with methods: Verviers, 1902–15

5.1 First experience of the Berlitz Method

The date of Harold Palmer's departure for the Continent is unclear, although, as we have seen, he must have left Hythe some time after 21 September 1901. His arrival in Verviers, close to both the Dutch and German borders in the French-speaking part of Belgium, was dated by the municipal authorities as 6 February 1902.¹ Palmer took up employment at the *École Internationale de Langues Vivantes*, a small school at 33, rue du Collège, Verviers. Advertisements for the school show that it claimed allegiance to the Berlitz Method (see 2.1 above), although it was not, apparently, itself a member of the growing Berlitz empire.² Thus, as Palmer himself later recalled, he 'received his first training as a teacher of English in a language-school run on Berlitz lines' (Palmer 1935c: 3). This training consisted partly in observation of lessons taught by another English teacher and partly in learning German from a different teacher, at the request of the Director of the school. The Berlitz Method was, according to his daughter, 'a revelation to him, especially as he had hitherto been in complete ignorance of the Direct Method in any of its forms, and at once he became an enthusiastic admirer of it' (Anderson 1969: 136). Previously Palmer had, it can safely be assumed, only experienced 'grammar-translation' procedures at school in Hythe, and he had not shown much interest in language learning, even during his six-month stay in Boulogne as a teenager.

1 Registre de Population de Verviers, années 1900–10. This chapter summarizes research undertaken mainly in Belgium. For access to local public records, I am grateful to M. Paul Bertholet, Librarian of the Société d'archéologie et d'histoire Verviétoise. Back issues of newspapers were consulted in the Bibliothèque publique principale de Verviers, and documents in PFVA provide additional information. The main secondary sources referred to are Bongers 1947, Anderson 1969 and Kuroda 1985.

2 Cf. Bongers 1947: 72. A flyer in PFVA confirms the name of the school, and the fact that it employed the Berlitz Method.

5.2 Independent teaching and learning

Palmer also seems to have spent a short period or periods teaching at a different branch of the same school at 46, Stationstraat, Maastricht, just over the border in the Netherlands.³ However, very soon after his arrival, the Verviers school appears to have folded as a result of a split between the two directors, and July 1903 advertisements in a local newspaper announce the start of English lessons to be given twice-weekly in Palmer's own rooms at 30, rue David.⁴ Although Anderson (1969: 136) records that her father set up his own school in 1903, Palmer was himself to claim in May 1905 (see below) that his 'Institute' was already three years old. It is possible, then, that, immediately following the closure of the *École Internationale*, Palmer set up on his own, but initially on a peripatetic basis. Certainly, by 1905 he was well-known as a teacher at locales other than his own premises, including the 'Société L'Aide Mutuelle', the 'Société Polyglotte', the 'Syndicat des Voyageurs', and the 'Mutuelle', and was also known to be teaching privately for the 'best families of Verviers'.⁵

Redman (1967a: 9) remarks that by this time he had become 'fascinated by languages, all languages, his own and other people's, natural and artificial, fascinated by the way they work. He was naturally eager to teach what he learned and learn as he taught'. It was out of his language *learning* as well as teaching experiences, then, that Palmer's own teaching approach began to evolve. Aside from his experiences learning German according to the Berlitz Method (and French

3 Details from a flyer advertising the Maastricht branch of the school in PFVA. The curriculum vitae transcribed by Kuroda (1985: 81) indicates that Palmer taught in Maastricht.

4 In one local newspaper, the *Union Libérale* (Verviers), an advertising war (beginning in March) between the original school and a break-away school formed by one of the two directors came to an end in May. In that month the new school declared victory, stating that the parent school had closed. However, there were no further advertisements for the new school from the latter part of June onwards, which suggests that it had itself failed. It is not clear whether Palmer had stayed with the old or moved to the old school but he seems to have either gone to Maastricht at this time (to a surviving branch of the old school?) or found himself quickly out of a job. The first advertisements for lessons by Palmer that I have come across appear in the 14 July 1903 issue of the *Union Libérale*.

5 Report in *Le Jour* (Verviers), transcribed (without dating) in the original typescript of Anderson 1969 (in PFVA), but omitted from the published version.

in his own way), Palmer may have attended classes in Oriental Studies as an auditor at the University of Liège during 1903–04.⁶

In September 1903, he had moved once again, to 7, pont du Chêne.⁷ In February 1904, advertisements began to appear for classes using the so-called ‘Palmer Method’, at 7, pont du Chêne, and announcing also the recent publication of the first instalment of a correspondence course (Palmer 1904: see below), which claims to employ that method.⁸ On 20 March he moved again, to 69, rue Spintay, and in April advertised both the start of German in addition to English lessons, and the appearance of the second instalment of the correspondence course.⁹ By September, the third and fourth instalments had appeared, and Palmer was advertising new German classes and the fact that four classes already existed for English.¹⁰ On 19 November he married a local woman eight years his junior, Elisabeth Purnode, and at the end of the month she joined him at rue Spintay.¹¹ Their daughter, Dorothee, was born five months later, on 28 April 1905.

5.3 The early ‘Palmer Method’ and the ‘Institut Palmer’

Already, by early 1904, Palmer was claiming to have developed his own ‘Method’. His 1904 English learning materials take the form of a correspondence course, *Méthode Palmer: La langue anglaise à l’usage des français*, published in Brussels

6 The editorial preamble to Palmer 1942a highlights the ‘training’ Palmer had received at the University of Liège, while the curriculum vitae in Kuroda 1985 indicates that he attended classes there in ‘Oriental Studies’ (my translation from Japanese) from 1903 to 1904. However, according to the archivist of the University of Liège (personal communication, April 1998), Palmer was not registered as a student, or even élève libre (auditor) during any of the years between 1901 and 1906. The only oriental languages offered during the period 1903–04 were Arabic, Persian and Chinese (*Programme des Cours. Année Académique 1903–1904*, Liège: Université de Liège, 1903). Palmer does not refer to any experience of learning these languages elsewhere in his publications, although Bongers (1947: 74) notes that in Verviers he took up Chinese, among other languages including Japanese as well as Esperanto and Ido.

7 Registre de population de Verviers, années 1900–10.

8 *Union Libérale*, 12 February 1904.

9 *Union Libérale*, 9–10 April 1904.

10 *Union Libérale*, 24–25 September 1904.

11 Registre de population de Verviers, années 1900–10.

but printed by his father at The Hythe Reporter Ltd. On the inside back cover of the first instalment, Palmer informs users that answers to exercises will be corrected by him if they are sent to his pont du Chêne address. It is doubtful that the venture was entirely successful in commercial terms, since no more than five instalments appear to have been issued in total. However, two years later, a roughly equal amount of text was added for publication of the course in book form (1906b), raising the total number of separate 'lessons' included from thirty-six to seventy-one.

Each sixteen-page instalment of the course contains a number of lessons. Their contents, including instructions to the teacher, draw obvious inspiration from the 'object lessons' of the first Berlitz textbook, but with the noticeable differences that French equivalents are given for words and sentences in English, and that phonetic transcriptions (apparently based on a system of Palmer's own devising) are provided for new vocabulary. Also, exercises for translation (both from and into English) follow the presentation of new words and patterns. Palmer already appears to have been planning at this time to bring out a similar course on French for English speakers, also in collaboration with his father.¹²

On 20–21 May 1905 an advertisement appeared in the local newspaper giving Palmer's school (still in his rooms at rue Spintay) a name for the first time, the 'Institut des Langues Étrangères Palmer'. In the advertisement, Palmer claims that his Institute is already three years old, emphasizes that the Method employed is modern but rational, and stresses the fact that lessons in English, German and Spanish are given by native speakers only.¹³ By this time, then, Palmer appears to have been employing other teachers. On 18 December, a banquet was given in Palmer's honour by the Société Polyglotte de Verviers, a report of which in one of the local newspapers not only indicates the esteem in which he was held in the local community but also confirms the fact that he was known to be 'always searching, always innovating, always improving his method' (see 5.4 below).¹⁴

12 A notice mentioning Palmer 1904 in the 5 November 1904 issue of *The Hythe Reporter* indicates that there were plans to issue a French version of this work by the following winter. This appears to have been published later, as Palmer 1907b.

13 *Union Libérale*, May 20–21 1905.

14 Undated (1905?) report in *Le Jour* (see note 5 above).

On 27 April 1906 Palmer moved with his family and school to a new address in the central square of Verviers: 20, place Verte.¹⁵ In a 19–20 May advertisement for the new school, it is described as the ‘Institut Palmer’, and classes are promised in Esperanto, as well as other languages. Palmer later recalled: ‘I once had a large class of Belgians to whom I taught Esperanto. Many were so encouraged by this fascinating study that they subsequently took up the study of English’ (Ichikawa 1961: 14).

In the space of four years, Palmer had clearly developed into a proficient and popular teacher of English, had mastered French to a point where he could use it as a means of explanation in his teaching materials (and, presumably, in his own teaching), had developed sufficient abilities in Esperanto to teach it successfully to others, and had overcome commercial rivals in establishing his own teaching operation in the centre of Verviers. The need to publicize his new business must have partly motivated the early development of his own ‘Method’, and in promoting this he exploited effectively the talents for publicity and publishing he had gained in his work for *The Hythe Reporter*. However, it is clear also that his new-found dedication to learning and teaching languages was born of genuine enthusiasm, as was his willingness to promote his ideas in the form of learning materials. He seems to have truly believed that he had new ideas to offer which were superior to those of Berlitz, relating to a rejection of the latter’s dogmatism and an advocacy of the judicious use of the students’ mother tongue as well as the target language. At this time, then, Palmer was very much following in the footsteps of nineteenth-century innovators in the ‘utilitarian methods’ for adults market (see 2.1 above and related appendices), enthusiastically developing his own ‘patent’ Method to rival those of his commercial competitors, on the basis primarily of his own teaching and learning experience rather than ‘academic’ theorizing. In particular, in developing a teaching approach out of his experiences of self-study, Palmer was similar to nineteenth-century innovators such as Hamilton, Gouin and Prendergast, all of whom justified their methods on the basis of their own learning experiences (there is no evidence, however, that Palmer was aware of the work of these predecessors at this point). At

15 Registre de population de Verviers, Années 1900–10.

the same time, as we shall now see, he was also coming to adopt what he would later term a 'scientific' approach to the development of ideas for language teaching.

5.4 Experiments in teaching, materials writing and language study

Although Palmer was confident, indeed, it might be said, brash enough to put his name to a new 'Method' only two years into his teaching career, this was to be just a starting-point. Having begun to establish his own independent business in Verviers, he was

free to use, and develop, whatever system of teaching he pleased. [. . .] [H]e explored the possibilities of one method after another, both as teacher and student. He would devise, adopt, modify or reject one plan after another as the results [*sic*] of further research and experience with all types of pupils and in connection with many languages — European, Oriental and Synthetic.

(Bongers 1947: 74)

In one overall assessment, Tickoo (1982a: 112) has emphasized that Palmer 'was essentially a life-long practitioner' with a strong 'commitment to the classroom' (rather, that is, than *a priori* theory), more or less constantly involved in a search for 'answers to [the] knotty problems' (ibid.) of language teaching practice. In modern terms, Palmer's attitude could be described as that of an 'action researcher': he attempted to develop solutions to problems which arose in practice by investigating these problems in a systematic fashion, developing new interventions on this basis, and then evaluating the success or otherwise of these innovations. The roots of this orientation lie in his early career when he began to engage in enthusiastic practical experimentation to improve his 'Palmer Method'.

This can be illustrated in relation to two particular lines of classroom-oriented investigation which Palmer apparently took up very early on and which were to remain career-long concerns: vocabulary limitation and phonetic transcription. With regard to the former, he recalled in 1936 that:

About 32 years ago I already had the idea that an economical approach to English might be made by first learning the words of most frequent occurrence, and I drew up and circulated among my pupils a list of what seemed to me to be the 100 English words of most frequent occurrence. [. . .]

I remember well that at the time I was in a state of revolt against the giving to pupils as a first vocabulary any haphazard assortment of words, as if taken at random out of a sack.

I noted at the time that the vocabulary taught in the first 20 lessons of the Berlitz method was particularly rational, especially for teaching purposes, and indeed this was one of my reasons for admiring that method — an admiration I still feel.

(Palmer 1936c: 14)

For Palmer, materials writing was to remain a privileged means of experimentation, as was to be shown most clearly during his years in Japan (see Chapters 7 and 8). Rather than wait for the results of research to become clear before publishing materials, his preference was first to innovate by issuing materials (whether to his own students, as illustrated in the above quotation, or to other teachers, as later in Japan) and to use the experience gained from their use to inform the development of further ideas and materials.

Another example concerns Palmer's early experimentation with phonetic transcription. According to Daniel Jones (1950a: 90), Palmer invented, around 1905, 'a system of phonetic transcription (with diacritic marks) which he used for some years'. (In fact, this transcription system, or a prototype of it, had already been used in the 1904 correspondence course described above.) In this area, Palmer was to describe his own development during the period 1905–10 as follows:

About five years ago, I commenced using a phonetic transcription for teaching English to my pupils [. . .]

During a period of about three years I used phonetics more or less experimentally, the pupils working from manuscript sheets. I was therefore free to introduce any modification which I might consider useful or necessary. From time to time I did modify a few details and according to the results obtained, either rejected or permanently adopted the modification.

(Palmer 1910a: 102–03)

This quotation shows clearly that Palmer had, by around 1905, developed a conscious 'action research', or, as he himself conceived of it, 'experimental'

orientation to his teaching. It is important to note, also, that the same kind of orientation extended to his own *study* of languages. A curriculum vitae written in the 1920s (Kuroda 1985: 81) indicates that he ‘conducted experiments and research into the phonetics of German, Spanish and Polish’ (my translation) between 1905 and 1913. This shows not only that by 1905 he had begun to study the latter two languages (in addition to Esperanto) but also that around this time he may have begun consciously to conceive of his ‘Institute’ as an institute for *research* as well as teaching.¹⁶

5.5 A spate of publications

The years 1906–07 saw a number of publications deriving from Palmer’s learning and teaching experiences up to that point in Verviers. For example, Jones (1950b: 4) implies that Palmer used his own form of phonetic transcription (around 1905) in a ‘card index system for helping students to learn languages. Instructions and exercises were printed on one side of each card, and keys were printed on the reverse side’. It is probable that Jones is referring here to the apparently no longer extant *Cartes Palmer* (1906a, 1907a) which are alluded to by Bongers (1947: 350), and that these were, like the 1904 correspondence course, self-instructional materials. They seem to have been printed locally and designed for use with his own students, and perhaps were based primarily on techniques Palmer had devised for his own experiments in language *learning*.

An innovative approach to self-instruction characterized another publication in the same year, Palmer’s (1906c) *Correspondance commerciale anglaise*. This consists not so much of learning materials as of an ordered collection of functional expressions for commercial correspondence, with interlinear translations into French. This book was expressly designed for ease of reference as and when the occasion arose, permitting even those who knew no English to write an accurate and comprehensible business letter. Verviers at the time had considerable commercial contacts with Britain, in particular in connection with its (at that time) thriving

16 Thus, the Institut Palmer in Verviers may be considered a kind of prototype for the Institute for Research in English Teaching whose establishment Palmer instigated on arrival in Japan.

textiles industry, and, as Anderson (1969: 137) notes, most of Palmer's students were 'hard-headed adults, not the captive audience of the [elementary or secondary school] classroom'. With this 1906c publication, Palmer was clearly responding to a need for (written) 'Business English' which had presented itself to him during his teaching of such students.

Further evidence of Palmer's interest in self-instructional materials-writing and in languages other than English is provided by two 1907 publications, for the study of French (1907b) and Esperanto (1907c) respectively. *The Palmer Method: Elementary French* (1907b) was issued in instalments, like Palmer's earlier (1904) correspondence course for English, and was similarly printed (and this time published) at the *Hythe Reporter* office, this time for adult learners in England.

While all the materials described so far were either printed for limited use or, in the case of *Correspondance commerciale* (1906c), published locally in Verviers, Palmer had, by 1906, succeeded in making arrangements with Brussels publishers for a wider distribution of two publications. The first of these (1906b) was simply a reissue in book form of his truncated (1904) correspondence course in English for French-speakers, with the addition of new lessons, while the second, his (1907c) *Méthode Palmer. Esperanto à l'usage des français* showed additional innovative features. I shall consider the latter book from two perspectives below, firstly (in 5.6) considering the nature of Palmer's overall involvement with Esperanto and secondly (in 5.7) analysing the book for the light it throws on the 'Palmer Method' as it had developed up to this point.

5.6 Enthusiasm for Esperanto

Palmer's enthusiasm for Esperanto (which, as we have seen, he began to teach in 1906) is likely to have first developed in the context of his active participation in the Société Polyglotte de Verviers, an association dedicated to internationalism, and the encouragement of internationalist attitudes through language learning.¹⁷ By the beginning of 1906 he had been elected President of the Esperanto Section of the

17 Undated (1905?) report in *Le Jour* (see note 5 above).

Société Polyglotte, had ‘nearly completed’ the prototype of *Esperanto à l’usage des français* (1907c) and was intending to prepare a similar text for the use of English-speaking students. Presumably, this was never in fact published, although in public lectures on Esperanto which Palmer gave in Hythe on 13 September 1906, and 1 September 1907, he appears to have been attempting to prepare the ground for such a venture. In August 1907, Palmer attended the Third Esperantist Congress in Cambridge, which he is said to have considered ‘the best of the three Esperantist congresses’. The implication here is that he had also attended the First and Second Congresses (in Boulogne, 1905, and Geneva, 1906, respectively).¹⁸ It is clear also that by around 1906 Palmer had developed good contacts in the Belgian Esperanto establishment, since his textbook *Esperanto à l’usage des français* (1907c) was to be written for Witteryck-Delplace, the principal publisher of Esperanto materials in Belgium.

Under the heading ‘En préparation’ in *Esperanto à l’usage des français*, two works (which appear not in fact to have been published) are listed: *Esperanto for the Use of English-speaking Students* (presumably, by analogy with *The Palmer Method: Elementary French* (1907b), intended for publication under the auspices of *The Hythe Reporter*), and *Esperanto Demandaro* (‘A set of Esperanto questions’; publisher not stated). As we shall see, Palmer’s interests seem to have shifted away from Esperanto in the ensuing years, and this may explain his probable non-completion of these works (indeed, there were to be no further publications of any nature until 1910).

One reason for Palmer’s failure to issue further (promised) publications for Esperanto may have been the schism which began to develop in January 1908 between the Esperanto movement (led by its founder, Zamenhof) and a Delegation (whose membership included Otto Jespersen) which had been set up with a view to the reform of this language (Forster 1982: 126–27). One of the leaders of the Esperanto movement in Belgium was Charles Lemaire, who was to become a close friend of Palmer’s during his time in Verviers (Anderson 1969: 137). Lemaire became an advocate of the Delegation proposals, which led to the construction of a ‘reformed Esperanto’ known as ‘Ilo’ or ‘Ido’, and in 1909 Lemaire issued his own

18 Articles and announcements in *The Hythe Reporter*, 27 January 1906; 22 September 1906; 24 August 1907.

textbook for the learning of this language (Lemaire 1909). As Jones (1950b: 7) recalled, Palmer came to consider Ido far superior to Esperanto, and it seems likely that this was a consequence of discussions with Lemaire, whose influence in other areas is acknowledged in the Preface to *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921a).¹⁹ Although Palmer's interest in artificial auxiliary languages was never to leave him completely (cf. Palmer 1947a), and may, along with his own multilingualism, have underwritten a certain ambivalence with regard to the dominance of English in, for example, the Japanese context (as expressed in Palmer 1926s), his energies appear to have been mainly devoted to natural languages from 1908 onwards. Nevertheless, two short 'specimens' of phonetic transcription he later contributed to *Le maître phonétique* (Palmer 1913f, g) show that he maintained contacts in Ido and Esperantist circles, respectively.

5.7 Maturing of the 'Palmer Method'

The contents of and preface to *Esperanto à l'usage des français* (1907c) provide useful insights into how the 'Palmer Method' had developed, five years into his teaching career. Firstly, as Palmer was later to note, the vocabulary was deliberately controlled, under the inspiration of Berlitz.²⁰ In the preface to the book, Palmer begins by stating that a teacher or textbook must basically do two things: *renseigner* (inform) and *enseigner* (inculcate). The latter being more important (since a language can be acquired without explicit information but not without opportunities for use), practice activities need to be provided. These may take the form of translation exercises, but techniques deriving from 'natural methods' are, Palmer explains, generally recognized to be superior. He goes on to describe some of these techniques, including 'conventional conversation' (which he claims to have

19 Forster (1982: 130–31) notes that 'A number of Esperantists were converted to Ido: it has been estimated that 20–25% of the leaders of the Esperanto movement became Idists: in Belgium, where reformist influence was strong owing to Lemaire, the figure was more like one-third'.

20 'In 1906 I drew up a learner's vocabulary in Esperanto and embodied it in an Esperanto textbook for French students of that language [1907c], and followed it up with a similar French vocabulary embodied in a book for teaching French to English students [1907b] — both of them inspired by the Berlitz selection' (Palmer 1936c: 15).

invented himself, and which was later to be featured also in *The Oral Method* (1921b) and *English through Actions* (1925c)). In essence, conventional conversation is distinguished from 'free conversation' in being based on certain conventions, namely: (i) the teacher must begin by providing a 'model sentence' which is to be practised, (ii) different types of question are used to elicit different types of response, which should be complete without being redundant, and (iii) the questions themselves should be easily answerable without prior knowledge, their repetition enabling students to understand the new language introduced.

Also proposed as relevant practice exercises are 'free conversation' and 'conversion' (that is, a type of transformation drill). Palmer disagrees with proponents both of traditional (translation) methods and extreme versions of the 'natural' method (clearly he is thinking here of Berlitz in particular), seeing no reason to deny the use of mother tongue resources for informational purposes (*renseigner*) — hence the prevalence of French explanations in the text itself — but emphasizing the importance of practice exercises which inculcate the ability to think in the target language (*enseigner*). Thus, while placing himself firmly on the side of innovation, he describes the Palmer Method as a judicious amalgam of old and new:

Certains extrémistes, il est vrai, dépassent la mesure et défendent absolument aux élèves l'emploi de la langue maternelle. Ils prétendent enseigner la langue étrangère exclusivement par elle-même. C'est évidemment aller d'un extrême à l'autre. La méthode idéale ne peut pas découler d'un absolutisme intransigeant, ses sources doivent être plus larges: elle doit être, d'après les nécessités de la langue à apprendre, le résultat d'une combinaison judicieuse des diverses méthodes, de traduction, et naturelles.²¹

(Palmer 1907c: [3])

It is clear from this quotation, then, as from the abundance of explanations in French in the text itself, that Palmer continued to be in favour of using the mother

21 'Certain extremists, it is true, go too far and absolutely prohibit the use of the mother tongue. They claim to be able to teach the foreign language exclusively *in* the foreign language. That is clearly to go from one extreme to another. The ideal method cannot be derived from a position of intransigent absolutism, its sources need to be broader: it must be, according to the requirements of the language to be learned, the result of a judicious combination of diverse methods, both translation-based and natural'.

tongue for presentational purposes. In *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages* (1917b: 77–103) a distinction between different kinds of presentation is made which further clarifies Palmer’s thinking on this issue, and which reaffirms his tolerance of translation for presentational purposes (there, he discusses how the meaning of a new ‘language unit’ can be conveyed effectively by (a) material association (i.e. associating the unit with that which is designated by it); (b) translation; (c) definition; and (d) context (i.e. giving examples of its use)). In his opposition to ‘absolutism’ in methodological matters²² and his support for a *judicious* combination of various methods, from a wide range of sources, Palmer shows that he was already beginning to move in the direction of the eclectic ‘science of language-teaching’ which was to be expounded in his later (1917b, 1921a and 1924a) publications.

5.8 Beyond method: Towards a ‘science of language-teaching’

Palmer’s lack of publications between 1907 and 1910, which has already been related above to the growing schism between Esperanto and Ido, may also be explained with reference to the preface of *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages* (1917b: 6), where Palmer indicates that, following exhortations from his friend Édouard Mathieu ‘seriously to go to work with a view to laying the foundations on which the science of language-teaching might some day repose’, he had in fact started on ‘an organized series of researches’ in connection with his own teaching, eight or nine years previously (that is, around 1908–09).

Palmer recalled this significant turning-point as follows, referring to his discussions with friends in Verviers:

You will remember our search for the one true standard and universal method, the goal that ever seemed so near, and yet which ever proved just beyond our grasp. You will also remember the day when we formulated our conclusion: *Ce n’est pas la méthode qui nous manque; ce qui nous manque c’est la base*

²² Compare his independence in political affairs as expressed in the (23 February 1899) General Election editorial for *The Hythe Reporter* quoted in Chapter 3 above.

*même de la méthode.*²³ Out of this arose the question, *Does the Science of Linguistic Pedagogy exist?* We regretfully concluded that it did not.

(ibid.: 5–6, italics in original)

This realization that what was needed was a principled basis for (the selection of) methods, in other words a ‘science of language-teaching’ gave rise to a new period of research work, this time with a new, higher purpose in mind. As Palmer (ibid.: 6) reported, with a view to ‘laying the foundations on which the science of language-study might some day repose’,

I started on an organized series of researches, submitting all sorts of methods to all sorts of tests under experimental conditions. [. . .] various types of exercises were designed, each one having its appropriate and distinct function to perform.

It is clear from this that Palmer’s view of research continued to be very much intertwined with practice: ‘experiment’ for him meant trying out different types of teaching approach or material and comparing results. Additionally, a ‘scientific approach’ meant developing general principles *on this basis* of experience and experiment. What was involved here, then, was an inductive procedure, whereby theory was derived from practice, observation and reflection on practice, rather than a deductive approach involving application of pre-existing theory *to* practice.

Many of the principles and procedures which were later incorporated into *The Scientific Study* and later works are reported by Palmer (1917b: 6) as having had their roots in the practical research he carried out from around 1908–09 onwards, with his own students at the Institute. Thus,

The normal ‘preventive’ course was differentiated from the special ‘corrective’ course; the ergonic method gradually developed, although then without a name; the replacing of the traditional orthography by the phonetic transcription produced the splendid results that we had foreseen; three distinct methods of ‘conversation drill’ resulted in fluency with accuracy; the respective principles of the ‘Microcosm,’ of ‘Catenizing,’ and of

23 ‘It is not ‘method’ we are lacking. What we lack is a *basis* for method’.

‘Substitution’ began to stand out clearly, and various types of exercise were designed, each one having its appropriate and distinct function to perform.

(ibid.)

One of the innovative, eclectic features of *The Scientific Study* was to be the way different kinds of courses are proposed for students with different goals and different prior learning experiences (in Chapter VI), clearly on the basis of Palmer’s years of experience teaching various types of learners in Verviers. The ‘corrective’ course mentioned in the above quotation refers to a consciousness-raising programme designed for what might nowadays be termed ‘false beginners’, in particular those who, like many of Palmer’s adult students in Verviers, have already attained some proficiency in reading but not in speaking or listening (1917b: 231). The ‘ergonic method’ and principles of ‘Substitution’ which Palmer also alludes to above refer to insights he had gained into the structure, or ‘mechanism’ of sentences, such that an infinite number of sentences may be composed from a limited number of smaller units, which he terms ‘ergons’ (1917b: 45). However, rather than having students build up sentences from smaller parts, Palmer was in favour of ‘substitution’ based on the ‘integral memorizing of a number of models’ (1917b: 117), or ‘phrases-types’ in Bréal’s (1893: 42–53) formulation, within which they would then ring the changes in a manner reminiscent of Prendergast (see 2.1 above). Palmer’s ideas on ergonomics and substitution were to be expounded and exemplified in his 1916 publications (see Chapter 6 below) as well as in *The Scientific Study*. Further ideas developed in the course of Palmer’s research included the principle of teaching a ‘Microcosm’, that is, a carefully selected basic vocabulary (1917b: 122), and the importance of ‘catenizing’ (that is, memorizing) as opposed to reasoning (1917b: 103). The types of ‘conversation drill’ alluded to by Palmer in the above quotation have already been discussed in relation to his (1907c) *Esperanto à l’usage des français*, while the use of phonetic transcription mentioned here related, apparently, to his joining the International Phonetic Association (IPA) in 1907, and will be considered further in the following section.

Aside from engaging in a series of organized teaching experiments, Palmer had begun to familiarize himself with the work of Reform Movement theorists including Sweet, Bréal and Jespersen, discussing them enthusiastically with friends

at the Société Polyglotte. Two of these friends, Georges Bevernage and Édouard Mathieu, are acknowledged in the preface to his Esperanto course (1907c: 13), and Palmer was perhaps, then, referring to the period 1906–07 when he later came to describe some of their joint activities as follows:

At the Société Polyglotte or at the Mutuelle we would preach reforms and carry glad tidings of phonetics, of ergonomics, or of semantics.

We would read Sweet, Jespersen, and Bréal, and comment on what we read, we would discuss the latest articles in *Le Maître Phonétique* and *Modern Language Teaching*.

(Palmer 1917b: 5)

It is clear, then, that besides developing a more ‘scientific’, that is, systematic attitude to his own teaching-related research, Palmer had begun to seek inspiration beyond his own immediate environment. Thus, to practical learning and teaching experience, experimentation and enthusiastic discussion with friends, Palmer joined ideas from reading sources, developing a growing enthusiasm in particular for phonetics and the ideas on language teaching associated with the IPA (see Appendix 4).

5.9 A growing interest in phonetics

Palmer’s new interest in developing a ‘scientific’ or ‘organized’ approach to language teaching appears to have been partly influenced by his growing involvement with mainstream phonetics and the associated ideas of Reform Movement theorists such as Sweet and Jespersen (see Appendix 3). In July 1907, according to Daniel Jones (1950b: 4), Palmer joined the IPA, of which Jones himself had become Assistant Secretary in the same year (Gimson 1968: 4). Although Palmer had originally joined by addressing his application to Paul Passy, in the ensuing years he exchanged correspondence with Jones ‘fairly frequently’ (Jones 1950b: 4).²⁴ As we shall see, this correspondence was to be partly public,

24 Under the heading ‘nouveaux membres’ in *Le maître phonétique* 22/7–8 (July–August 1907): 77, Palmer is shown to have joined the IPA by contacting ‘P. P’. (i.e., Paul Passy).

involving a 1910–11 exchange of views in the pages of *Le maître phonétique*, the bulletin of the Association.

From around 1907, then, Palmer's internationalist interests found an outlet increasingly in IPA activities, and decreasingly in the Esperanto movement. Palmer devoted as much enthusiasm as he had previously attached to Esperanto in pursuing his new passion for phonetics, or more specifically the application of phonetics to language teaching and learning (for these were always to remain Palmer's primary concern). His daughter Dorothée (born in 1905) recalled him using a notebook to transcribe the speech he heard around him very much in the fashion of Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady* (Anderson 1969: 141). Indeed, Palmer first taught her to read and write in phonetic notation, leaving her to pick up traditional orthography on her own (ibid.: 138–39).

On 4 April 1909, Palmer moved with his family and school to a different central location in Verviers, 2, rue Ortman-Hauzeur, where they were to remain until the outbreak of the First World War. By now the school was being advertised variously as 'Institut Palmer (de(s)) Langues Étrangères' or 'Institut Palmer des Langues', or 'Institut Palmer'. In June, an apparently new venture was announced: a summer school in Folkestone. An advertisement on 29 August shows that Palmer had 'returned from England', the school presumably having in fact been arranged.

In March 1910, an advertisement shows that an 'English evening' was to be held every Monday. Advertisements also show that Palmer was concentrating on the teaching of English and German, having dropped earlier Spanish and Esperanto lessons.²⁵

Part of Palmer's experimentation at this time was connected with 'the replacing of the traditional orthography by [. . .] phonetic transcription', which is said to have 'produced [. . .] splendid results' (1917b: 6, already cited above). His growing interest in this area was evidently linked to his membership of the IPA, and 1910 saw his first contribution to its bulletin, *Le maître phonétique*, an article on 'The transcription of English vowels' (Palmer 1910a).

In this article (itself written in phonetic script, as had been required of contributors to *Le maître phonétique* since its inception), Palmer offers up his own

25 Advertisements in 1910 issues of *Union Libérale*.

transcription system for appraisal, wondering whether, for the purposes of materials design for French-speaking students, a system using French acute, 'grave' and circumflex accents might not most effectively represent the English vowels. This contribution drew a response from Daniel Jones under the same title as Palmer's article, in the subsequent issue of the journal (Jones 1910). Collins (1988: 111) analyses the exchange of views as follows:

Jones chooses not to criticise Palmer's transcription for the bewildering array of diacritics which he presents to the reader, but instead concentrates on his usual theme of the need for unity of transcription. [. . .] The intellectual stance of the two men is typical of them both. Palmer is innovative, inquisitive, and eager to test his ideas out on others; Jones is more cautious and pragmatic, and unwilling to upset the balance which has already been achieved.

A review of some of Palmer's privately produced teaching materials (Palmer 1910b) by George Noël-Armfield (a colleague of Jones in the UCL Department of Phonetics) indicates that Palmer had been working on materials specifically for the teaching of *spoken* English (Noël-Armfield 1911). In itself, this seems to indicate the growing influence on Palmer's thinking of IPA priorities. Evidently, also, Palmer had been accompanying his letters to Jones with examples of work-in-progress. The title of the particular 'sheet' reviewed by Noël-Armfield, 'Les 23 particules verbales', seems to prefigure Palmer's later, more intensive investigation of the grammatical peculiarities of the twenty-four 'anomalous finites' (see Palmer 1926c).

Palmer's growing enthusiasm for phonetics did not diminish his interest in vocabulary. Several projects were started at around this time which, if they not been interrupted by the outbreak of war in 1914, would have, according to Palmer himself, resulted in published learning materials. For example, he recalls having, in 1911,

conceived the idea of an English vocabulary of some 500 words. This was to appear in card form, one card for each word and containing abundant illustrative sentences *none of which should include any word outside the selected list*. I worked at this for above three years. [. . .]

Had this work not been interrupted by the invasion of my town by the German troops [. . .] this vocabulary would certainly have developed into a definite beginners' vocabulary, with dictionary and texts written within its radius.

(Palmer 1936c: 15, emphasis in original)

Palmer was also to describe how, in the years 1912–14, he had been attempting to compile an English–French Learner’s Dictionary but suffered from having no quantitatively-limited vocabulary to serve as its basis (1934bb: 6). He may also have been considering the possibility of associating controlled vocabularies and simplified texts (1936g: 21).

In another contribution to *Le maître phonétique*, Palmer (1911a) takes up some of the points Jones had made in his 1910 reply, and enquires in what respects, precisely, his transcription system might be considered to diverge from that of the IPA. This drew forth a further, lengthy response from Daniel Jones in the form of a second article on ‘The transcription of English vowels’, in the subsequent issue of the journal (Jones 1911).

In a shorter contribution (1911b), Palmer thanks T.W. Benni for a discussion of Polish sounds which had appeared in a previous issue of the journal. It is clear, then, that the original questions about these sounds (posed anonymously in an earlier issue) had in fact been Palmer’s.²⁶ Thus, Polish is confirmed as one of the several languages Palmer studied in Verviers.

In the summer of 1912, Palmer again visited Folkestone with a group of his younger students (Anderson 1969: 139). On the boat from Ostend to Dover, he met Daniel Jones for the first time. Jones, who was returning with his wife, Cyrille, from a lecture tour in Scandinavia and Germany (Collins 1988: 126), later recalled this accidental meeting as follows:

Seeing my name on a luggage label he came up to me and we had a memorable talk on phonetics. We struck up a friendship which it has been a privilege to me to enjoy ever since. I had corresponded with him for several years previously, and this meeting confirmed the opinion that I had already formed, namely, that he possessed outstanding talent for linguistic theory and pedagogy, and that he was an accomplished French scholar and a fine language teacher.

(Jones 1950a: 90)

26 Benni’s answers to these questions had appeared in the form of an article entitled ‘Polish Sounds’, in the May–June issue of the journal (pp. 71–77), while the questions had themselves been posed in the January–February issue (pp. 3–4), in a section entitled ‘Enseignement mutuel’.

Palmer's (1912) *Cours élémentaire de correspondance anglaise* (of which no copies appear to remain) may have taken up where *Correspondance commerciale anglaise* (1906c) left off, although the title seems to indicate that it is a course book as opposed to a work of reference. Palmer's growing interest in the nature of spoken English evidently did not exclude an interest in his students' needs in the area of English letter-writing.

His chance meeting with Daniel Jones in 1912 may have spurred him to contribute even more actively to *Le maître phonétique*, with several very short pieces being published in 1913 (Palmer 1913a, d–g). The majority of these are simply 'specimens' of phonetic transcription, submission of which had been encouraged in a special supplement to the bulletin the previous year (IPA 1912: 19).

Two more specimens (Benselin 1913 and Smedley 1913), both treating Wallon French of the Verviers region, were apparently submitted by Palmer but transcribed by acquaintances (whom he had, perhaps, interested in phonetics). He also contributed brief notes supporting Daniel Jones's previously expressed position that articles in traditional orthography should be permitted in the journal (Palmer 1913b), and provided useful information on how to obtain phonetic typewriters (Palmer 1913d).

In 1913 Palmer also published a course book specifically for *spoken* English, the *Manuel d'anglais parlé. Méthode Palmer* (1913c). A notice of 'Publications Received' in the July–August issue of *Le maître phonétique* affirms that this work employs the alphabet of the IPA. This is true enough for consonants, but for vowel sounds Palmer shows his independence of thought in retaining many of the diacritics he had both described and used in his 1910a and 1911a articles. Nevertheless, the concept of this book was clearly influenced by Palmer's membership of the IPA. *Manuel d'anglais parlé* gives evidence of a much greater concern with the unique nature of the spoken language (as is indicated by its title) than Palmer's previous textbook publications, as well as with the pedagogic use of phonetics. Thus, the book begins with fourteen pages explaining and exemplifying the English sound system, including consideration of assimilation and weak forms of vowels. Also, prefiguring Palmer's 1916b, 1922a, b and 1924b publications, the work contains example words and sentences in phonetic transcription (accompanied

by French translation) but not in traditional English orthography. Practice is confined largely to translation exercises, the text being remarkable rather for the wealth of information it provides on the spoken language (it is a precursor, in this respect, of *A Grammar of Spoken English* (Palmer 1924b)) than for its methodology. Nevertheless, innovative regular review sections contain a greater variety of exercise types. While printed by a local publisher, Léon Lacroix, this was the first (and only) of Palmer's Verviers works to appear under the name of his own Institute.

5.10 Outbreak of war and escape from Belgium

Advertisements show that Palmer again repeated his Folkestone summer school venture in 1913.²⁷ In 1914, the summer school was again advertised in *Le maître phonétique*, by means of an 'open letter' directed to those who 'have had the misfortune to learn the English language on a faulty and inadequate basis; whose pronunciation, vocabulary and phraseology is of that class generally characterised as "Continental"'. The summer school had been set up with the aim in mind of 'breaking up the old vicious habits and of inculcating the new ones by means of modern methods on a strictly phonetic basis'.²⁸

However, on 3 August, presumably before the summer school was due to begin, the German army invaded Belgium, and Verviers was one of the first towns to be captured. Six weeks later Palmer, his wife and daughter escaped, leaving behind almost all of their possessions (some of which, at least, were recovered in 1919, according to Jones 1950b: 5). Palmer's daughter, Dorothee, recalled the escape as follows:

We remained undiscovered under German occupation for six weeks when Father was advised by his friends there to leave because British citizens were

27 For example, in the July–August 1913 issue of *Le maître phonétique*, which contains an advertisement in the form of 'An open letter to every member of the [IPA]'.

28 *Le maître phonétique*, March–April 1914: [page of advertisements preceding p. 23].

being arrested and deported to prison camps. At the time, the frontier into Holland was still open.

One morning, Father rushed home with the news that the frontier was being closed the next day — it was our last chance of escape! The three of us were bundled into an agricultural cart that was leaving immediately to fetch supplies from Holland for the last time. This necessitated abandoning all our possessions. When we arrived in England, we had literally only the things we stood up in — we were truly refugees!

(Anderson 1969: 139–40)

Having followed a semicircular route through Holland to Ostend (not yet captured by the Germans), the family reached safety in Folkestone, where Palmer's parents and sister were living (Anderson 1969: 140). The 19 September issue of *The Hythe Reporter* indicates that they had arrived three days previously, and includes a brief report from Palmer himself:

The invasion came as a great surprise to us. There had been so many rumours of the coming of the Germans that at last we refused to believe anything.

On the morning of August 4th [. . .] there appeared with dramatic suddenness a patrol of Hussars in the Market Place [. . .]

Then followed six weeks of nightmare [. . .] in the end we got away; an opportunity occurred and we managed to slip through.

Many of the themes which were to characterize Palmer's later work had their roots in his Verviers experience, including his attachment to oral teaching procedures, his commitment to practical research, his deliberate avoidance of dogmatism, and his use of phonetics and vocabulary limitation to lessen the language learning load. At the same time, he had developed a passionate attachment to internationalism and multilingualism at a time of mounting tension between European nations. His sociability, talent for both writing and publicity, organizational skills and 'creative versatility' (this being, according to his daughter (Anderson 1969: 143), his most outstanding characteristic) had all found expression in his work in building up his school in Verviers, the Institut Palmer, and in producing materials associated with his own 'Palmer Method'. Latterly, Palmer's energies had been devoted to more organized and 'scholarly' research which was to bear fruit in the identification of particular 'principles'

underlying language teaching methods and their selection during his time in London.

6.1 Public lectures at UCL and ‘Some principles of language teaching’

After arriving in Folkestone, Palmer at first organized a language school there for other refugees from Belgium. However, according to his daughter’s account (Anderson 1969: 140), he decided before long to move to London, where he obtained an appointment as French master in a secondary school.¹ This was to provide Palmer with his only direct experience of school teaching (as opposed to teaching adults or university students), encouraging him by 1917 to present ‘an ideal standard programme’ for school-children learning French (this was to take up the entirety of Part V of *The Scientific Study*).

Following his move to London, Palmer must have been in contact with Daniel Jones, who had in 1912 founded the first Department of Phonetics in a British university, at University College London (UCL) (see Collins 1988 and Collins and Mees 1998 for further description and analysis of Jones’s early career and the development of the Department).² Partly through his earlier (in particular, 1910a and 1911a) contributions to *Le maître phonétique*, Palmer had already attracted Jones’s attention, and their chance meeting in 1912 and subsequent correspondence had evidently enhanced Jones’s appreciation of his abilities. These factors may have led to a commission to write a popularizing pamphlet on phonetics for the IPA, *What is Phonetics?* (published in 1915), or Palmer may himself have proposed this for publication. More importantly, he was also invited by Jones to

1 The school in question may have been Clapham Grammar School, whose principal, A.B. Winnifrith, had formerly been a teacher at Palmer’s old school (Prospect House School, Hythe). Winnifrith is thanked in the Dedicatory Preface to 1917b for his ‘timely help’ (p. 8). Dorothee Anderson’s granddaughter recalls her saying that the family lived at first in Balham (near Clapham) following the move to London (Victoria Angela, personal communication). They were later to move to 15, Guilford Street, near Russell Square (see letters quoted in Ichikawa 1961).

2 Details reported in this chapter relating to Palmer’s work at UCL and the School of Oriental Studies (SOS) are derived from direct consultation of Departmental reports, calendars and minutes of meetings (in UCL archives) and SOS prospectuses and governing board reports (in SOAS archives). The main secondary sources referred to are Collins 1988, Collins and Mees 1998 and Jones 1950a, b.

give three public lectures at UCL, starting in October 1915, on methods of language teaching, and from the beginning of 1916 Jones offered him further part-time employment (to be considered below).

In an unpublished report on the 1915–16 academic session, Jones commented on Palmer's first year in the Department of Phonetics as follows: 'Mr. H.E. Palmer was appointed temporarily to assist the department during this session. [. . .] His work has been most successful, and his course of public lectures attracted large audiences'.³ These initial public lectures launched Palmer's brief but very productive academic career, and so I shall consider them in some detail here.

Palmer gave three public lectures in the autumn term of 1915 under the rubric of 'Methods of Language Teaching'.⁴ Regarding their contents, Jones (1950a: 91) recalls one of them as follows: 'I remember well his giving in 1915 an illuminating lecture on limited vocabulary in which he exhibited some well thought out word lists'. This particular lecture may, then, have related to the work on English vocabulary control which Palmer later recalled having started in earnest in 1911 (Palmer 1936c: 15; see also Bongers 1947: 75). Alternatively or additionally, considering that his lecture audience was probably composed largely of modern language teachers (Jones 1950b: 5), it may have related to still earlier work regarding the vocabulary of French, embodied, according to Palmer himself, in his (1907) French textbook and 'inspired by the Berlitz selection' (Palmer 1936c: 15). It is clear in either case that vocabulary limitation was a central component of Palmer's thinking with regard to course design as early as 1915, this topic accounting as it seems to have done for the entirety of one of his first three lectures at UCL.

Further light may be thrown on the possible contents of Palmer's first three lectures, and thus on his language teaching theories at the beginning of his London years, through reference to a May 1916 article which he wrote for the British journal *Modern Language Teaching*, entitled 'Some principles of language teaching' (Palmer, 1916a), this being his first widely diffused statement on the

3 Daniel Jones, [1916(?)], 'Report of the Phonetics Department: 1915–16', typescript, in Daniel Jones Papers, UCL archives.

4 *Report of the University College Committee for Presentation to the Senate, Feb. 1915–Feb. 1916*, in UCL archives.

subject. The article is divided into three distinct sections, as follows: I. 'Vocabulary and its aspects' (pp. 65–68); II. 'The vicious tendencies of the student of language' (pp. 68–70); and III. 'Synthetic construction v. substitution' (pp. 70–74). Given that one of Palmer's three 1915 public lectures was on vocabulary, and that the article is divided into three largely unrelated parts, it seems quite likely that their contents correspond to those of the 1915 lectures. Whatever the truth of this overall speculation, Section 1 of the article at least enables us to reconstruct some of the likely contents of the lecture referred to by Jones (1950a: 91) which related to vocabulary control.

This first section begins with the axiomatic statement that 'The whole of the language is contained in its vocabulary' (p. 65). Vocables (a term invented to capture 'words', 'phrases' and 'inflexions') may be considered from different points of view: phonetic, orthographic, inflexional, grammatical (or functional), and semantic. They may be classified according to their degree of speciality or generality, degree of frequency, and degree of intercombinability with other vocables (clearly, these considerations, including the careful, linguistically aware way the nature of 'a word' is defined and the concern with collocational relationships, prefigure Palmer's better-known lexicological work of the 1930s (see Chapter 8 below)). In the ideal teaching method, Palmer continues, each of these factors should be taken into consideration to ensure proportion, economy, interest, and general efficiency. Here the concern to establish a principled approach to course design on the basis of a judicious amalgamation of linguistic and practical considerations is shown to have been a major part of Palmer's overall approach very early on, deriving out of his practice and theorization of practice in Verviers. This careful, balanced approach to course design was to feature also in *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages* (1917b) and was to constitute one of Palmer's most enduring legacies to ELT (see Chapter 10).

Sections 2 and 3 of Palmer's 1916a article balance the concern with language evident in Section 1 with considerations relating more specifically to language *learning*. As we shall see, a dual emphasis on language and language learning was to continue to characterize Palmer's overall approach to language teaching theory throughout his career. At this early point, his ideas on learning were not as fully developed as his ideas on language, however, and in Section 2 of the

1916a article he does little more than list (on the basis, it seems clear, of reflection on experience as well as adherence to Direct Method principles) certain ‘vicious tendencies [that is, pernicious habits] of the student of language’ (pp. 68–70), namely:

1. Neglect of the peculiar characteristics of the foreign language;
2. Illegitimate importation of elements of the mother-tongue into the foreign language;
3. Artificial separation of words;
4. Non-recognition of the status of group-words;
5. Giving preference to strong forms;
6. Reliance on the visual instead of the auditive memory;
7. Mental translation into the mother-tongue.

Here Palmer shows at once his overall agreement with Direct Method emphases on the importance of learning to think in the target language (cf. Tendencies 1., 2. and 7.), his particular concerns at this stage with pronunciation-related aspects of oral proficiency (3., 4., 5.) and his belief in the need to approach language learning primarily through the spoken medium (6.). The same tendencies (with 3 and 4 above collapsed into one) were to be listed on pp. 263–65 of *The Scientific Study* (1917b), where practical implications are made clearer. There, the ‘integral memorizing of a number of models’ was to be described as the best means of obviating the vicious tendencies (p. 117). In the 1916a article this link is less explicit, but in a free-standing third section of the article, Palmer presents practical ideas on ‘substitution’ which, by implication, are designed to overcome the pernicious habits previously listed. These ideas will be summarized in the following section.

6.2 Advocacy of the ‘Substitution Method’

Taken together, the third section of Palmer’s 1916a article and his two (1916b, c) textbook publications in the same year provide evidence of a major area of interest

which had not been previously indicated in his published work, that is, the use of substitution tables to provide practice in the spoken language. As presented in Section 3 of his 1916a article, Palmer's ideas on what he terms there a 'Substitution Method' can be summarized as follows:

Synthetic construction v. substitution (pp. 70-74)

Object: 'to outline a system of language study differing fundamentally from both Direct Method and the Method of Synthetic Construction. We may term it the Substitution Method' (p. 70).

1. Memorize one or more complete sentences in the foreign language
2. Learn the meaning of every memorized sentence
3. Isolate one of the sections and replace it rapidly and successively by a number of substitutes, each of which has the same or nearly the same grammatical function as the original, but a different semantic value
4. Isolate and replace by substitutive elements other sections of the original sentence
5. Multiply the results by cross-combination

In presenting the contrast between 'traditional' and 'modern' methods in these terms as one between 'synthetic construction' and substitution, Palmer appears to be deliberately and explicitly distancing himself from the, by then, commonplace distinction between 'Translation' and 'Direct' Methods (p. 71). He claims that the reformers' prevailing doctrine of the 'Total Exclusion of the Mother-Tongue' has obscured the issue, and that the truer rallying cry for the Reform Movement should have been 'The Total Exclusion of Synthetic Construction' (ibid.). 'Synthetic construction' itself is described as the process students are traditionally engaged in — that of attempting painstakingly to piece together into sentences the units of the target language, previously decomposed (analysed) for them by the method-writer, with reference to explicit rules which are also provided. In contrast with this 'inefficient' process, Palmer proposes the 'Substitution Method', although not as 'the one royal road to successful language study, nor the panacea for all linguistic ills' (p. 71). The process engaged in by the learner is as detailed in the synopsis

above, and the article concludes with exemplification of the stages involved, taking the Japanese sentence ‘*watakushi’wasore’omi’mas*’ as the ‘model sentence’.

This third section of the 1916a article clearly relates to two textbook publications in the same year, *Colloquial English* (1916b) and *Colloquial French* (1916c), the latter authored jointly with Daniel Jones’s wife, Cyrille Motte, who was (like Palmer by this time) a part-time teacher in the UCL Department of Phonetics. Both books exemplify the ‘Substitution Method’ in practice (a contemporary reviewer (Anon. 1916: 230) also points out this relationship). These two works are books of substitution tables allowing for multiple possibilities of combination which are designed for the development of fluency in spoken English and French, respectively. Only phonetic symbols are used (being, in both cases, those of the IPA, with no innovative features). The substitution tables in each work are headed by instructions as to how many times the model sentence (and combinations derived from it) should be repeated within a prescribed number of seconds. No sequels were published for either work, although they seem to have been originally intended.

Substitution is described in more detail in the Introduction to *Colloquial English* (1916b: iii) as follows:

Substitution may be described as the process by which any authentic sentence may be multiplied indefinitely by substituting any of its words or word-groups by others of the same grammatical family and within certain semantic limits.

Palmer goes on (pp. iii–iv) to provide an explicit justification in terms of learning theory for the procedures he recommends:

It is more than probable that a process of unconscious substitution is the one by which we learn at an early age the intricacies of our own language, and possess before even knowing the meaning of the term grammar nine-tenths of the grammatical machinery of our own tongue.

While Prabhu (1985: 166) makes the point that, with his emphasis on the possibilities of ‘indefinite multiplication’, Palmer was ‘very aware of the generative character of language structure’ (see also Howatt 1984: 237 and Barrutia 1965: 63),

Diller (1971: 40, 42) defines what he terms Palmer's (1916b) 'pattern drills' as audiolingualist *avant la lettre*, a point I shall return to in Chapter 10.

It has been plausibly suggested by Tickoo (1968, 1986) that Palmer had been inspired to advocate his 'Substitution Method' by what appear to be the rather similar ideas of Thomas Prendergast (see 2.1 above and Appendix 1.3). Palmer did not himself acknowledge Prendergast's influence at this time; indeed, his use of phonetic notation (in his 1916b and 1916c textbook publications), the concern he thus showed for obviating pronunciation-related 'vicious tendencies', and the relative simplicity of his model sentences distinguish Palmer's substitution method from Prendergast's 'Mastery System'. In this aspect of his work, then, Palmer showed originality in combining a concern for lexical and structural grading inherited from Berlitz and an IPA-influenced emphasis on accurate pronunciation with substitution table-based drills similar to those of Prendergast.

The third, substitution-related section of Palmer's 1916a article provoked noteworthy responses in subsequent issues of *Modern Language Teaching* from two of the best-known contemporary advocates of Reform in the UK context, Walter Rippmann (Rippmann 1916) and F.B. Kirkman (Kirkman 1916). Neither response was particularly supportive of Palmer: Rippmann suggests that his ideas are derivative of Prendergast's, inappropriate for school teaching and potentially 'deadly dull' (p. 110), while Kirkman devotes several pages to clarifying that the Direct Method is *not*, as implied by Palmer, synonymous with 'total exclusion of the mother tongue' (see also my comments in 2.3 above on the way the full range of Reform Movement ideas tended to be systematically and mistakenly reduced to this one principle in the UK and the USA, including by Palmer at this stage in his career).

In subsequent works (for example, *The Oral Method of Teaching Languages* (1921b), the *Memorandum on Problems of English Teaching* (1924a) and *English through Actions* (co-written with D. Palmer, 1925c)), Palmer was to demonstrate more substantially his familiarity with nineteenth-century predecessors including Prendergast. Thus, in the 1924a *Memorandum*, just as Gouin is acknowledged for his influence on Palmer's 'Action drill' (p. 56), Prendergast is also acknowledged for the first time, with substitution exercises being defined there as follows: 'these consist of systematic exercises in composing Derivative Speech Material from

Basic Speech Material by means of devices such as those used by Prendergast' (p. 25). The criticisms by Rippmann and Kirkman may have stung Palmer into referring to sources or predecessors better in this way; indeed, by 1921 (in Part I of *The Oral Method* (1921b)), he was to show a more refined understanding of the Direct Method, better acknowledging the variety of principles it entails (pp. 10–11) while continuing to propose alternatives. The early years of his career at the University of London were characterized by an evident desire to be seen as a language teaching and learning *innovator*, and this did little, apparently, to endear him to the progressive modern language teaching establishment.

Later, Palmer privately showed some resentment at Rippmann's influence over modern language teaching in the UK,⁵ and it seems possible that the latter's commentary on his 1916a article led him to a sense of being more marginalized than he would like from 'Reform' (of modern language teaching) in the UK, as well as to an awareness that he should become more familiar with precursors (or at least *demonstrate* such familiarity, as he does in *The Oral Method*).

Ideas relating to substitution tables (considered under various labels, including 'ergonics', 'mathematical' or 'constructive' grammar, and later (in Japan) 'mechanism' or 'pattern' grammar) were to maintain their importance throughout Palmer's career, leading ultimately to the identification of the verb-patterns contained in his (1938h) *A Grammar of English Words* and Hornby, Gatenby and Wakefield's (1942) *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary*.

In his 1916a article, Palmer had explicitly stated that his Substitution Method did not represent 'the one royal road to successful language study, nor the panacea for all linguistic ills' (1916a: 71), but this is contradicted within the same article by his strong assertions that earlier reformers had missed the essential point. Clearly he was seeking a 'niche', but neither tact nor modesty were in his nature. While his advocacy of a particular 'method' seems, partly for this reason, to have been unsuccessful at this stage in his career, his arguments in the following year (in *The Scientific Study*) for the establishment of a 'science of language-teaching' were to be taken relatively seriously.

5 In an unpublished, handwritten 'News-letter' he wrote for friends and family during his 1931–32 visit to the USA (in PFVA).

6.3 Part-time work in the Department of Phonetics (1916–17)

Following Palmer's successful public lectures in the autumn term of 1915, Jones invited him to take over some practical phonetics and spoken English classes for foreign students, as a part-time teacher with (as yet) no official status, in the Department of Phonetics, UCL. He was also asked by Jones to give two further courses of lectures, this time not public but *within* the Department, in the second and third terms of the 1915–16 academic year.

It was only with effect from the beginning of the 1916–17 session that Palmer officially became a part-time assistant in the Department, receiving a salary in that academic year of £45. During this session, apart from giving a year-long course of lectures on 'Methods of Language Teaching' (see 6.4 below), he continued to teach phonetics and various types of spoken English class for foreign students, with the latter including courses on 'The Theory of Colloquial English' and 'English orthoepy' (that is, 'The art of deducing a given pronunciation from a given orthographic form' (1917b: 314)). Palmer also became involved in the research work of the Department, himself running a research class for investigation of what he termed a 'mathematical theory of grammar'.⁶ In apparently related work, Palmer gave public lectures during the 1916–17 academic year on 'The Ergonic Theory of Colloquial French'.⁷ His 'mathematical' and 'ergonic' theories of grammar appear to have been extensions of his 'Substitution Method'⁸ and were to find practical expression not only in the 'French Ergonic Chart' appended in *The Scientific Study* (1917b) — this being a kind of master substitution table for the whole of the French language — but also in a cluster of works published in Japanese in 1928 (Palmer 1928o–r), and later in his work on the identification of English sentence patterns.

6 [Daniel Jones], [1917(?)], 'Report of the Phonetics Department: 1916–17', typescript, Daniel Jones Papers, UCL archives.

7 *Report of the University College Committee for Presentation to the Senate, Feb. 1916–Feb. 1917*, p. 32, in UCL archives.

8 'Ergonic construction' was the term Palmer came to prefer for what he had earlier been terming 'Substitution Method' (see Palmer 1921a: 175–77).

In this connection, Jones's notes for a lecture delivered to the Philological Society, London, on 4 May 1917 (cited in Collins 1988: 230), indicate that Palmer's research interests had seemed to be taking a 'general linguistic turn':

The subject of Sechuana grammar has been investigated in a masterly fashion by my colleague Mr. Palmer. I supplied him with the phonetic materials, and he applied to them his unique knowledge of general grammar. The result is that he has collected grammatical information of the highest interest and importance.

Around this time Palmer had read Saussure's (1916) *Cours de linguistique générale*, and his evidently strong interest in paradigmatic relations of substitution – and in aspects of linguistics beyond phonetics, generally — may have been influenced by his enthusiasm for that work.⁹

Palmer appears at this time to have been focusing as much on French as on English, in the hope, still, of leading a reform of modern language teaching in British schools. Thus, he was also working on a minimum vocabulary for French which he exhibited at UCL, entitling this 'The French Microcosm' (Palmer 1936c: 15). Finally, it was also, apparently, in 1917 that Palmer was first attracted by the subject of intonation (Jones 1950a: 91), and his interest in this area was to lead to major (1922a, 1933h) contributions.

Palmer's (1917a) *A First Course of English Phonetics* takes up where *What is Phonetics?* (1915) left off, continuing to popularize the subject of phonetics for the benefit of those ignorant of this science. More specifically, however, *A First Course* is 'intended primarily for foreign students of English' (p. vii), and contains numerous exercises on English sounds and words. This work was evidently based on experience gained in the teaching of phonetics over the preceding year at UCL.

9 Jones was to recall that Palmer 'got very keen on the de Saussure book' around 1916 (Daniel Jones to David Abercrombie, 9 March 1957, as transcribed in Collins and Mees 2003, Vol. 8).

Palmer's lecture courses, as developed during his six years in London, marked a crucial point of convergence between theory and practice in the twentieth-century history of foreign language teaching, signalling a new academic status for the discussion of methodological issues, and the beginning of a period of work for Palmer (extending into his years in Japan) which, overall, involved an important and original 'fusion of the two reforming traditions inherited from the previous century: the applied linguistic approach of the Reform Movement and the [. . .] methodology of the Direct Method' (Howatt, 1984: 212). As Howatt (1984: 214) emphasizes, '[t]he Jones-Palmer association effectively ensured that one of the 'ground rules' of English as a foreign language [in the second half of the twentieth century] was an applied linguistic philosophy'.

While catalysed by Jones's further invitations to Palmer (following his successful début in 1915) to participate in research work in the Department of Phonetics and to take over Spoken English and phonetics classes, the major crucible for the development of Palmer's applied linguistic philosophy undoubtedly continued to be his academic lecture course(s), expanded from the original Autumn 1915 series and entitled variously 'Methods of Language Teaching', 'Methods of Language Study', 'Theory of Language Study' or 'Linguistics' over the period up to 1921. The overall importance of Palmer's work in London has been previously established, but neither the contents of nor the likely audience for his lectures during the period have been investigated in detail, despite the influence their planning might be assumed to have had on the publications by Palmer which have most often been described as 'classic' or 'definitive', *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages* (1917b) and *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921a). In view of their significance in contributing to the establishment of an 'applied linguistic' approach to language teaching, particular investigation of the relationship between Palmer's academic lectures and his major 1917 and 1921 publications therefore appears to be justified.

As I have noted above, aside from being invited to teach phonetics and spoken English classes for foreign students from the beginning of the calendar year 1916, Palmer had been recommended by Jones to give two further courses of

lectures, this time not public but within the Department, in the second and third terms of the 1915–16 academic year.¹⁰ Details of these lecture courses do not appear in the UCL calendar for this session since they were not originally scheduled, but lectures for the following (1916–17) year *were* scheduled in advance, and are listed as follows:

Methods of Language Teaching

S27. Methods of Language Teaching

Tuesday at 5.30.

S28. A similar Course, specially adapted to the needs of missionaries and other Students of remote languages.

Third Term: Monday at 5.30.¹¹

From this listing, it appears that in the 1916–17 academic year Palmer gave, for the first time, a year-long course of within-Department lectures on ‘Methods of Language Teaching’ (the separate term-long course for missionaries represents the beginnings of work on methods more particularly of language *study* to which I shall return below). Although the detailed contents are unstated in the above listing, the planning of this year-long course of lectures may be assumed to have contributed considerably to the accomplishment of *The Scientific Study*, which was apparently completed in or before January, 1917 (although the book was not published until July, this is the date of its Dedicatory Preface).

This (1917b) work, then, presents a distillation of Palmer’s ideas on language and language teaching as these had developed out of his work in Verviers and had been refined during a year of lecturing at UCL. Despite his apparent advocacy of a particular ‘Substitution Method’ in 1916, Palmer had, as we have seen, already begun to develop an awareness in Belgium that what language teachers most required was not a ‘perfect method’ but a principled or ‘scientific’ basis for the selection of methods. *The Scientific Study* is significant for going ‘beyond method’ and extending Sweet’s (1899) call for a rational basis for language teaching in its overall argument in favour of the establishment of a ‘science’ which would enable this activity to be placed on a firm theoretical footing.

10 Entries for 8 December 1915 and 8 March 1916, University of London, University College Managing Sub-committee Minutes 1913–16, in UCL archives.,

11 *University College Abridged Calendar for the Session 1916–17*, p. 38, in UCL archives.

The contents of Palmer's 1916a article, along with his 1916–17 work on the 'ergonics' and the 'microcosm' of French (see 6.3 above) all find a place in *The Scientific Study*, as may be seen from the following annotated list of contents. At the same time, however, it can be seen that many parts of this work appear to have no parallel in Palmer's 1916a article or concurrent research work, and are likely, as I have already suggested, to have developed primarily under the stimulus of planning the year-long academic course on 'Methods of Language Teaching' in the 1916–17 session:

Annotated list of contents of Palmer 1917b (*The Scientific Study*)

(italicization and associated annotations refer to Palmer's previous known work in the area)

Part I: Introductory

Part II : *The Nature of Language* [cf. 1916a, Section 1]

Part III : Preliminary Factors of Linguistic Pedagogy

Part IV: The Principles of Linguistic Pedagogy

(Fourfold aim of the student; Segregation; Active v. Passive Work; Semanticizing; *Learning by Heart (primary vs. secondary matter)* [cf. 1916a, Section 3]; Gradation; *The Microcosm* [cf. research work described above]; Subconscious Comprehension)

Part V: An Ideal Standard Programme

Part VI: Special Programmes

Part VII: *The Functions of the Teacher* [cf. 1916a, Section 2]

Part VIII: The Student

Part IX: Conclusion

App. I: *Condensed and Abridged Scheme for a French Ergonic Chart* [cf. 1916c, and research work and public lectures described above]

An anonymous review of this book in *Modern Language Teaching* (Anon. 1918) criticizes its 'scientific nomenclature', but recognizes that it 'marks a distinct advance in methods of language teaching' (p. 61). Subsequent judgement, indeed, has awarded the work classic status, as one of the first books to (attempt to) establish a 'science' of language teaching on the basis of principles relating to language and language learning. The book prefigures applied linguistics as constituted in the latter half of the twentieth century in proposing the establishment of a new 'science of language-study' on the basis of insights from philologists, phonetics, grammarians, lexicologists, modern pedagogy and psychologists, with

these insights ‘placed in such order and with such observance of proportion that the inevitable conclusions will suggest themselves’ (Palmer 1917b: 22).

For Palmer, at this stage, adopting a ‘scientific’ approach seems to have been largely a question of ordering, or organizing many existing sources of insight into a coherent whole: ‘To lay the foundations of the science of language-study it will not be necessary to make new discoveries; it will be quite sufficient to collect factors which are perfectly well known and to co-ordinate them into one comprehensive system’ (ibid.). The new science must be founded, then:

in accordance with the scientific method, which is:

(a) To collect isolated facts and factors in such numbers as to cover the whole field of inquiry.

(b) To classify, examine, and correlate them.

(c) To draw from them certain conclusions upon which the fundamental principles may be established and stated in categorical terms.

(d) To confirm and justify these principles by putting them to the test of actual and continual practice.

(Palmer 1917b: 20)

The need for such an ordering is related to the insight expressed in the Preface to *The Scientific Study*, that: ‘*Ce n’est pas la méthode qui nous manque; ce qui nous manque c’est la base même de la méthode*’ (1917b: 5–6). This realization, which, as we have seen, had come to Palmer during his own search for the ‘ideal’ method in Verviers, goes beyond existing partial suggestions for language teaching such as those of the nineteenth-century innovators considered in 2.1 above. In relation to these, Palmer states, ‘We gain an impression of praiseworthy efforts clashing with one another and of a general haziness and lack of co-ordinated system’ (1917b: 25). Palmer hints that organization is needed not only conceptually but also materially: ‘the “ploughing of lonely furrows” should be replaced by co-ordinated efforts to discover the best means and to adapt these means to the right end’ (1917b: 26–27). The need for conceptual and material co-operation and co-ordination is repeated in Palmer’s concluding exhortation: ‘if you hold with us that the future of language-teaching and study should be based on organized and unified thought, then collaborate in the work which so far has barely commenced’ (Palmer 1917b: 281). Institutionalization, Palmer seems to suggest, needs to go

hand in hand with his theoretical pleas for a science of language-teaching to be established.

The Principles of Language-Study (1921a) and the *Memorandum* (1924a) were to take up the same themes, complementing the largely linguistic, though practical approach of *The Scientific Study* with additional insights relating to the psychology of language learning.

6.5 Lectures at UCL and classes at SOS (1917–18)

As we have seen, the writing of *The Scientific Study* (which, as Howatt (1984: 237) has remarked, appears to have been written ‘in a sustained rush of inspiration’, as if, indeed, it were a transcription of lectures actually given) coincided significantly with and is likely to have been greatly stimulated by the award to Palmer of a year-long course of academic lectures within the Department of Phonetics, UCL, on ‘Methods of Language Teaching’. However, changes in the titles and stated contents of Palmer’s lecture courses at UCL and (latterly) at the School of Oriental Studies (SOS) in the period 1917–21 reveal a gradual shift in focus away from teaching and towards language *learning* or ‘study’. At the same time, in spite of his uncertain employment status, Palmer began to establish a pioneering role for himself at UCL and, latterly, SOS in teaching a form of general linguistics.

These trends began to become evident already in the 1917–18 academic year, when Palmer’s salary as a part-time assistant was raised to £50 and his lecture course on ‘Methods of Language Teaching’ expanded, with a total of five term-long ‘modules’ being offered on the following topics: ‘How to Learn a Foreign Language’ and ‘The Nature of Language’ (Term One), ‘How to Teach Languages in Schools’ and ‘Constructive Grammar: An outline of the general theory as applied to all languages’ (Term Two) and ‘How to Teach English to Foreigners’ (Term Three).¹² The two courses on ‘The Nature of Language’ and ‘Constructive Grammar’ constituted a new departure not only for Palmer but also for the Department as a whole into the explicit teaching of general linguistics. Beginning in

12 *University College Abridged Calendar for the Session 1917–18*, p. 38, in UCL archives.

the first term with 'How to Learn a Language' and 'The Nature of Language' Palmer showed the dual emphasis on psychology and linguistics which was to constitute the overall originality of his new 'science of language-teaching'. At the same time, the provision of two different courses on 'How to Teach Languages in Schools' and 'How to Teach English to Foreigners' (the first time, it should be noted, the latter subject had been established at university level in Britain) shows a new ambivalence; whereas Palmer had initially hoped to engage with modern language teaching reform in the UK, new opportunities relating to the composition of the UCL student body were presenting themselves in a demand to provide training to foreign teachers of English.

The only public lectures Palmer appears to have given in this (1917–18) session were a series of five lectures on 'Scientific Methods of Language Study, and their Importance to the Empire'.¹³ Judging from the title, these lectures are likely to have been related to the propaganda effort for Jones's (ultimately doomed) plan for the establishment of an 'Imperial' Institute of Phonetics.¹⁴ The title indicates in addition, however, Palmer's own preference for 'Methods of Language Study' as opposed to 'Methods of Language Teaching' in self-description of his interests at this time and subsequently.

Although Palmer's Third Term course for missionaries was not originally scheduled to be repeated for the 1917–18 academic year, the course was in fact reinstated by force of 'consumer' demand: at the 5 March 1918 meeting of the College Committee, approval was given to the proposal from a Dr. Steele, Secretary of the Board of Study for the Preparation of Missionaries that:

in connection with the classes to be held under their [i.e. the Board's] auspices during the Summer Term [. . .] Mr. H.E. Palmer should be asked to give a Course of Five Lectures on 'Methods of Language Study', intended specially for missionary students.¹⁵

13 *Report of the University College Committee for Presentation to the Senate, Feb. 1917–Feb. 1918*, p. 38, in UCL archives. These were advertised in advance simply as 'A course of six lectures on "Methods of Language Study"' (*The Times*, 6 May 1918).

14 Entry for 29 October 1918, University College Professorial Board Minutes, in UCL archives. See also Collins 1988: 298–394.

15 Minutes of University College Committee, 1917–18, in UCL archives.

Apart from continuing teaching of Spoken English and phonetics (discussed further below), it was in this (1917–18) session, also, that Palmer may have begun teaching at the recently established School of Oriental Studies (SOS), now known as SOAS. All teaching of both phonetics and linguistics at SOS (which first began admitting students in January, 1917¹⁶ was, at this time, provided by staff from Jones's UCL Department of Phonetics.¹⁷ Jones himself had started things off, giving a special course of six lectures on phonetics (attended by SOS teaching staff as well as students) in the summer term of the very first (1916–17) academic session of the new School¹⁸ and, for the 1917–18 session, he was invited to give a year-long course of Saturday lectures on Phonetics, to be followed each time by a Practical Class.¹⁹ Although Jones was timetabled to give the Practical Class as well as the lecture²⁰ it is possible that this task was handed over temporarily to Palmer, since he himself recorded in a later curriculum vitae (see Kuroda 1985: 81) that he first started teaching at SOS in 1917. Whether or not this was the case, it is clear that Lilius A. Armstrong, who appears to have first taken up teaching duties in the UCL Department of Phonetics in February 1918, had originally been intended for this role (Collins, 1988: 231), and is likely in fact to have begun to teach the Practical Classes in Phonetics at SOS, perhaps replacing Palmer in this as in other areas (see below).

16 *School of Oriental Studies* [. . .] *Report of the Governing Body and Statement of Accounts for the 15 Months Ending August 31st, 1917*, p. 3, in SOAS archives.

17 *School of Oriental Studies* [. . .] *Report of the Governing Body and Statement of Accounts for the Year Ending August 31st, 1921*, p. 6, in SOAS archives.

18 *School of Oriental Studies* [. . .] *Report of the Governing Body and Statement of Accounts for the 15 Months Ending August 31st, 1917*, p. 6, in SOAS archives.

19 *School of Oriental Studies* [. . .] *Prospectus for the Second Session (1917–18)*, p. 19, in SOAS archives.

20 *School of Oriental Studies* [. . .] *Prospectus for the Second Session (1917–18)*, p. 27, in SOAS archives.

6.6 Hiatus and turning-point (1918–19)

For the 1918–19 academic year, Palmer's salary was reduced drastically to £10, with the number of classes he was timetabled to teach also being cut (and his course on 'Methods of Language Teaching' being dropped entirely in favour of promised public lectures). On the other hand, it appears to have been during this (1918–19) session that Palmer began giving originally unscheduled lectures on linguistics / methods of language study to students enrolled at SOS.

Thus, the 1918–19 academic year saw the initially unscheduled organization at SOS of a 'special course of Lectures in Linguistics, with a view to the particular needs of missionaries studying Oriental Languages', this course being taught by an unnamed member of the UCL Department of Phonetics staff.²¹ No-one in Jones's Department, including even Jones himself, seems to have shared Palmer's interests (already noted above) in the areas of general linguistics and methods of language study,²² and there seems to be no question, then, that it was Palmer who was responsible for this innovative course of lectures.

As we have seen above, Palmer had already become involved in the linguistic preparation of missionaries during the 1916–17 session at UCL, planning a course for the Third Term which was described as treating 'Methods of Language Teaching' but 'specially adapted to the needs of missionaries and other Students of remote languages'.²³ What is actually being indicated here, it would seem, is a course on methods of language *study*, that is (in modern parlance), a form of 'learner training'. This term-long course was repeated at UCL in 1917–18, due to force of demand (see above), being termed, more appropriately, 'Methods of Language Study'. In the following, 1918–19 session, the course was, it seems, simply transferred to SOS, being retitled at that point a 'Special course of Lectures

21 *School of Oriental Studies* [. . .] *Report of the Governing Body and Statement of Accounts for the Year Ending August 31st, 1919*, p. 8, in SOAS archives.

22 For Jones's lack of interest in theoretical linguistics, see Collins (1988: 396). By contrast, Palmer was possibly the first British linguist to read Saussure's *Cours de Linguistique Générale* (1916) in the original, to cite this work, and to recognize its importance (cf. note 9 above and Palmer 1921a: 78).

23 *University College Abridged Calendar for the Session 1916–17*, p. 38, in UCL archives.

in Linguistics, with a view to the particular needs of missionaries studying Oriental Languages'. This transfer to SOS from UCL of linguistic preparation for missionaries also seems to have involved phonetics, as is implied in the following SOS report on the 1918–19 session, part of the last sentence of which has just been cited:

Lectures and practical classes in Phonetics have again been held throughout the Session, and owing to a special demand on the part of missionary students, an additional course was arranged in the Third Term. A special course of Lectures in Linguistics, with a view to the particular needs of missionaries studying Oriental Languages at the School, was also arranged.²⁴

In the 1918–19 academic year, Palmer's 'Linguistics' course for missionaries, now held at SOS, still appears to have been of a provisional and demand-dependent nature, being originally unscheduled, just as in 1917–18 at UCL.

It is important to emphasize that Palmer was the first ever teacher in the University of London (or, indeed, the UK) of a subject termed 'Linguistics', from late 1918 or early 1919, at SOS. His lectures in this area, however, are likely to have related primarily to the practical objective of preparing missionaries (and latterly SOS students generally) for the learning of 'remote' (Oriental) languages. Unfortunately, the contents of these lectures are unknown, but it seems likely that they combined considerations of the nature of language (with a special emphasis on constructive grammar) with insights into language learning (as were to be given full written expression in *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921b): see 6.8 below).

Meanwhile, at UCL, Palmer's lecture load for the 1918–19 academic year appears to have been much reduced:

Theory of Language Study

Public Lectures will be given on : —

1. The Teaching and Learning of Foreign Languages.
2. The Nature of Language.
3. Constructive Grammar.

For particulars see separate leaflet.²⁵

24 *School of Oriental Studies* [. . .] *Report of the Governing Body and Statement of Accounts for the Year Ending August 31st, 1919*, p. 8, in SOAS archives.

25 *University College Abridged Calendar for the Session 1918–19*, p. 39, in UCL archives.

Possible reasons why Palmer's within-Department academic courses reverted to being given in the form of public lectures in this (1918–19) and the following two (1919–20 and 1920–21) academic years will be investigated below. Here, I will simply note that, firstly, 'Theory of Language Study' replaces 'Methods of Language Teaching' as the overall title for the lecture series (and that this title was retained for all subsequent years), and, secondly, two of the three proposed public lecture courses reflect the primarily 'linguistic' concerns which seem to have first been formally expressed in Palmer's within-Department lectures in the previous year. In reality, though, while six public lectures are reported as having been given on 'The Nature of Language', and an unstated number of lectures on 'Methods of Language Study', no lectures appear to have been actually given on 'Constructive Grammar'. On the other hand, in 1918 Palmer gave four (originally non-scheduled) lectures on 'The Problem of an International Language', and four more on 'What Constitutes "Correct" Speech?'.²⁶

Palmer was permitted leave of absence for the whole of the Third (Summer) Term of 1919 to enable him to return to Verviers with his family, for the first time since their escape in 1914.²⁷ There they recovered some possessions and officially vacated the rooms in rue Ortman-Hauzeur on 2 May. After spending the summer in Ensival, which adjoins Verviers to the west, Palmer and his family left again for London on 9 September.²⁸ Palmer's wife, Elisabeth, was to return to Belgium temporarily in 1920 to give birth to a son, Tristram Edward Leonard.²⁹

26 *Report of the University College Committee for Presentation to the Senate, Feb. 1918–Feb. 1919*, p. 28, in UCL archives. The latter course was subsequently repeated in the form of public lectures (*The Times*, 4 March 1919).

27 Entry for 4 March, Minutes of University College Committee, 1918–19, in UCL archives.

28 Registre de population de Verviers, années 1910–20; Registre de population d'Ensival, années 1910–20.

29 Tristram's place of birth is given as Belgium and his full name recorded in the Air Force War Records of Deaths 1939–48, Family Records Centre, London.

6.7 Lectures at SOS and UCL (1919–21)

For the 1919–20 academic session, Palmer was again employed as a part-time assistant at UCL, with a twenty-fold salary increase to £200 (and with a £30 per term supplement for his continuing work as an ‘occasional lecturer’ at SOS, which was thus placed, for the first time, on a secure footing). While Palmer was no longer, with effect from the 1918–19 academic year, required to give classes in English phonetics for foreign students at UCL (being replaced in this area by Lilius Armstrong), he was responsible almost single-handedly for the ‘Complete Course in Spoken English’ for foreign students which had now begun to be offered by the Department. Starting in the 1919–20 session he gave lectures on ‘The Grammar of Colloquial English’ and offered practical classes in grammar and composition (and, from the beginning of the 1920–21 Session, conversation) for students following this course of study.

Palmer’s ‘Methods’ lectures at UCL in the 1919–20 academic year were again public and occasional, rather than constituting a year-long departmental course as in 1916–17 and 1917–18. As we shall see, this restriction was compensated for by developments at SOS, but in 1919–20 Palmer’s UCL lectures were simply advertised as follows:

Theory of Language Study

Public Lectures will be given by H.E. Palmer on: — ‘Methods of Learning Foreign Languages.’³⁰

In fact, only four lectures appear to have been actually given (dealing, as scheduled, with ‘Methods of Learning Foreign Languages’), while four originally unscheduled lectures were additionally given, on a topic of increasing interest to Palmer (see 6.8 below), ‘English Intonation’.³¹

30 *University College Abridged Calendar for the Session 1919–20*, p. 42, in UCL archives.

31 *Report of the University College Committee for Presentation to the Senate, Feb. 1919–Feb. 1920*, p. 42, in UCL archives.

It is worthy of note that the sub-title of the advertised lecture series makes no reference to the teaching, but only to the *learning* of foreign languages. Indeed, Palmer's interests were turning increasingly towards principles of language *study*, in line with an apparent shift in teaching priorities towards linguistic preparation at SOS. Thus, for the same (1919–20) session the status of his SOS 'Linguistics' lectures was formalized: they were advertised in advance for the first time, as 'Special Courses in Linguistics [. . .] given [. . .] by arrangement with University College', and attendance by ordinary (non-missionary) students was welcomed.³²

For the following (1920–21) session Palmer was awarded full-time (assistant) status at UCL, although with no salary increase. Again, however, his UCL lectures (which continued to emphasize the *study* as much as, if not more than the *teaching* of languages) were public rather than departmental. There was just a slight shift of emphasis (towards 'theory' and away from 'methods') in the stated course contents:

Theory of Language Study

Public Lectures will be given by H.E. Palmer on: — 'The Theory of Language Study.'³³

Surprisingly, Palmer is not reported as having actually given these (or any other) public lectures at UCL during the 1920–21 session (perhaps he was too busy writing his 1921 publications).³⁴

On the other hand, 'Linguistics' / 'Methods of Language Study' (taught by Palmer alone) had by 1920–21 become one of the three most popular subjects at SOS, behind only Phonetics (in first place) and Arabic.³⁵ Indeed, the following presentation of numbers of students attending courses in the various subjects on

32 *School of Oriental Studies* [. . .] *Prospectus for the Fourth Session (1919–20)*, p. 22, in SOAS archives.

33 *University College Abridged Calendar for the Session 1920–21*, p. 43, in UCL archives.

34 Normally public lectures were recorded in *Reports of the University College Committee for Presentation to the Senate* (in UCL archives), but there is no report of the lectures in question during the period February 1920 to February 1922.

35 In this session, out of a total of 412 students registered (92 for the whole year), 100 took Phonetics, 64 Arabic, and 59 Linguistics. (*School of Oriental Studies* [. . .] *Report of the Governing Body and Statement of Accounts for the Year Ending August 31st, 1921*, pp. 8–9, in SOAS archives.

offer at SOS over its first few years of existence clearly indicates the growing popularity and establishment not only of phonetics but also, latterly, of the course on ‘Linguistics’ / ‘Methods of Language Study’ which Palmer had single-handedly pioneered:

Numbers of students registered for courses at SOS (1917–22) ³⁶ (Only totals for the most popular six subjects in each academic year are given)					
1917–18 (Third Term only)		1918–19 (Third Term only)		1919–20	
26	Arabic	67	Arabic	122	Phonetics & Linguistics
19	Phonetics	47	Phonetics	106	Arabic
19	Turkish	26	Hindustani	100	Hindustani
16	Chinese	26	Japanese	46	Mandarin
10	Hindustani	20	Chinese	30	Japanese
10	Sanskrit	15	Turkish	29	Swahili
1920–21		1921–22			
100	Phonetics	107	Phonetics		
64	Arabic	85	Arabic		
59	Linguistics	53	Chinese		
55	Urdu	53	Urdu		
40	Chinese (Mandarin)	45	Linguistics		
30	Persian	35	Japanese		

It may be seen, then, that from its relatively humble beginnings at UCL as a short, practical course in methods of language study for prospective missionaries (in the third term of the 1916–17 session), Palmer’s course had become by the 1920–21 session one of the three most popular subjects for students (by this time not exclusively or even mainly missionaries) starting out on or engaged in the study of Oriental languages at SOS. A further instance of official recognition for Palmer’s

36 Statistics derived from *School of Oriental Studies* [. . .] *Report of the Governing Body and Statement of Accounts* for the years ending 31 August 1918 (pp. 5–6), 1919 (pp. 4–5), 1920 (p. 6), 1921 (pp. 8–9) and 1922 (pp. 7–8), in SOAS archives.

contribution to language studies at SOS came on 28 June 1921, when the College Committee of UCL (still Palmer's principal employer) discussed a request from SOS for the teaching of linguistics as well as phonetics to be placed on a more permanent footing. Palmer was awarded a regular termly salary supplement for what was called his 'Elementary course in linguistics (1 hour lecture)', while Jones was awarded a similar fixed supplement to his UCL salary for his SOS phonetics teaching.³⁷

Between 1918 and 1921, then — apparently a rather fallow period for Palmer in terms of academic lectures at UCL (only public lectures were given, as we have seen above) — he appears to have carved out a niche for himself at the newly-established School of Oriental Studies, tailoring his contributions to an entirely different student body from the practising modern language teachers who had attended his first UCL lectures. Rather than being teachers, his SOS audience, as we have seen, was one of (prospective) missionaries and, latterly, other students of so-called 'remote' languages.

In such circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Palmer should have emphasized more and more strongly methods of language *study* as opposed to *teaching*, even in his public UCL lectures, nor, indeed, that this shift of emphasis should be reflected in his second 'classic' work, *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921a), to which we now turn.

6.8 *The Principles of Language-Study*

The Principles of Language-Study (1921a) complements *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages* (1917b), presenting a more 'thought-through, distilled and authoritative' (Howatt 1984: 237) overview of principles of language pedagogy than the earlier work. As may be seen from the annotated list of contents below, while discussion of language teaching takes up the latter two-thirds of the book (Chapters VI–XVI), this is preceded by an innovative discussion of the nature of language *learning* (Chapters I–V), evidently relating to ideas developed in the

37 Minutes of University College Committee, 1920–21, in UCL archives.

course of Palmer's engagement in what would nowadays be called 'learner training' for students at SOS.

Annotated list of contents of *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921a)

(Chapters which emphasize language learning as much as or more than teaching are asterisked; chapters which have a corresponding part in *The Scientific Study* (1917b) are italicized.)

* *Chapter I: Our Spontaneous Capacities for acquiring Speech* [cf. 1917b, Part IV : Active v. Passive Work; Subconscious Comprehension]

* Chapter II: Our Studial Capacities and how to use them

* Chapter III: Why we must use our Studial Capacities

* *Chapter IV: The Student and his Aim* [cf. 1917b, Part III: Preliminary Factors]

* Chapter V: The Supreme Importance of the Elementary Stage

Chapter VI: The Principles of Language-teaching [cf. 1917b, Part I : Introductory]

* Chapter VII: Initial Preparation [= 1st principle]

* Chapter VIII: Habit-forming and Habit-adapting [= 2nd principle]

* Chapter IX: Accuracy [= 3rd principle]

Chapter X: Gradation [= 4th principle] [cf. 1917b, Part IV : Gradation / The microcosm]

Chapter XI: Proportion [= 5th principle] [cf. 1917b, Part IV : Fourfold aim / Segregation]

Chapter XII: Concreteness [= 6th principle] [cf. 1917b, Part IV : Semanticizing]

Chapter XIII: Interest [= 7th principle]

Chapter XIV: A Rational Order of Progression [= 8th principle]

Chapter XV: The Multiple Line of Approach [= 9th principle]

* *Chapter XVI: 'Memorized Matter' and 'Constructed Matter'* [= potentially, a 10th principle] [cf. 1917b, Part IV : Learning by heart]

Whereas discussion of the 'nature of language' had been central in *The Scientific Study*, this receives surprisingly little attention in *The Principles of Language-Study*, which does not refer at all to teaching in its title. Absent also are the practical examples of course design and pedagogy which had characterized the former work. Indeed, given the nature of Palmer's 'learner training' work at SOS, as revealed by the research reported above, it seems possible to read the first five Parts of *Principles* quite literally as a (target language-neutral) treatise on how readers might themselves consider learning (not simply preparing to teach) a foreign language.

6.9 *The Oral Method of Teaching Languages*

At UCL, Palmer had become involved in the core research work of the Department of Phonetics, to which he made several original contributions — notably, as we shall see in 6.10 below, in relation to the intonation of English. Throughout, however, his interests extended beyond phonetics, and were firmly related to the needs of teachers and learners. His Spoken English courses enabled him to refine his ‘Palmer Method’ into what he began to term the ‘Oral Method’ (as presented in *The Oral Method of Teaching Languages* (1921b)), although overall he had arrived at a position of principled eclecticism, arguing (in the *The Principles of Language-Study*) that teachers should be open to ‘multiple lines of approach’ and not be dogmatically attached to any one single method.

Palmer contrasted his ‘Oral Method’ with the ‘Direct Method’ from two points of view: not only (as in his 1916a article) in relation to use of the students’ mother tongue, but also in relation to extent of exposure to and practice in the written language. This reflects not only Palmer’s continuing attachment to oral classroom procedures (deriving from his original grounding in the Berlitz Method) but also his attachment to the priority of the spoken language since joining the IPA. By now, indeed, Palmer had gained a fuller appreciation of the nature of Reform Movement achievements, as is shown in his initial literature review.

As may be seen from the list of contents below, the second part of *The Oral Method* is a compendium of practical techniques (or ‘forms of work’ as Palmer calls them), with examples drawn mainly from the teaching of English. Thus, *The Oral Method* appears to take over some of the functions previously played by Parts V and VI of *The Scientific Study*, presenting specific teaching techniques, not, as there, according to their place in a syllabus but according to their position in a new type of compendious classification:

List of contents of *The Oral Method of Teaching Languages* (1921b)

Part I: The Oral Method

- I. What is the Oral Method?
- II. In what the advantage of the Oral Method consists.
- III. The three types of oral courses.
- IV. The Oral Method and the adult student.

Part II: Forms of work suitable for use in an Oral Course

- I. Purely Receptive Work
 - Exercises in Unconscious Oral Assimilation
 - Exercises in Conscious Oral Assimilation
 - Imperative Drill
- II. Receptive and Productive Work
 - Reproduction
 - Conventional Conversation
 - Normal Conversation

This book presents a wide range of techniques and procedures which are consistent with the learning theories presented in *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921a), but the link is not made explicit. Only in Palmer's later work in Japan (in particular, the (1924a) *Memorandum on Problems of English Teaching* were principles (as represented by *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921a)) and language teaching practice (as described in *The Oral Method* (1921b) to be fully joined together.

6.10 Innovative materials for spoken English

Palmer's *English Intonation with Systematic Exercises* (1922a), *Everyday Sentences in Spoken English* (1922b) and *A Grammar of Spoken English* (1924b) represent the fruits of his practical teaching and related research work specifically in the area of Spoken English in the Department of Phonetics, UCL.

It was, apparently, in 1917 that Palmer was first attracted by the subject of intonation (Jones 1950a: 91), and his interest in this area was to culminate in

his major 1922a and 1933h contributions. Jones (1950a: 91) indicates that *English Intonation* (1922a), building on the work of H. Klinghardt and H.O. Coleman, ‘extended very considerably our knowledge of this interesting branch of phonetics’. Palmer’s later ‘A new classification of English tones’ (1933h) may be seen to have represented a further advance, at least in pedagogical applications in this field.

Intonation is highlighted also in *Everyday Sentences* (1922b), which consists of a compendium of conversational expressions for foreign learners of English, classified both situationally (in Part II) and, in Part III, according to what would nowadays be termed ‘notions’ and ‘functions’ (indeed, this was to be one of the works consulted by the Council of Europe team in the course of production of its partly notional-functional ‘unit-credit scheme’ in the 1970s).³⁸ Palmer’s later (1925b) manual for Japanese learners of English conversation (*English Conversation and How to Learn It*) was to present a similarly notional-functional classification of ‘word-groups’ for memorization. In his introduction to *Everyday Sentences*, Palmer emphasizes that it is intended to ‘provide [students] with a characteristic selection of those sentences which are likely to be of the greatest use [. . .] in the first stages of [their] study of Spoken English’ (p. ix). Based on the view that many mistakes by foreign learners relate to imperfect use of ‘idioms’ as opposed to grammar, this work provides a preliminary justification for Palmer’s later, much more detailed research into collocations.

Since Palmer is already said to be ‘Author of “A Grammar of Spoken English”’ on the title page of the second (1923) edition of *Everyday Sentences* (1922b), it is likely that his completion of this comprehensive and ground-breaking pedagogical grammar (the major work for which he was later to be awarded a D.Litt. by Tokyo Imperial University) and its eventual publication in 1924 were somewhat delayed. Although he spent much of his first year in Japan on its revision (see Chapter 7 below), the book (Palmer 1924b) clearly relates mainly to his previous teaching of spoken English at UCL. Palmer was himself to recall its genesis as follows:

38 John Trim, personal communication, 8/8/96.

In [1917] I was working at an English structural vocabulary to be used a [sic] sort of sentence-building machine. I subsequently used this vocabulary as a basis for *A Grammar of Spoken English* that I started writing in 1919 or 1920.

(Palmer 1936c: 15)

As this quotation shows, Palmer's interest in grammar, generally, derived from a basis in lexicological research (as was to be the case, also, in Japan: see Chapter 8). Also, it should be noted that his focus was on grammar for production (hence the prevalent use of substitution tables in *A Grammar of Spoken English*). This focus was to be characteristic of his later work on sentence patterns, extended by Hornby in the post-war years. This emphasis, and the way *A Grammar of Spoken English* developed out of the 'Substitution Method' is shown in the preface, which states that the 'chief function of a grammar book' is 'to furnish the student with a selection of those categories which will enable him to perform the greatest number of useful substitutions' (Palmer 1924b: xxx). Also, 'Copious examples are given to illustrate every rule, and are so devised as to afford the fullest opportunities for the process of substitution' (p. xxxi). The combination of phonetics and grammar, first attempted in *Manuel d'anglais parlé* (Palmer 1912) is also extended in this work:

All words and examples are given in phonetic spelling, the only possible procedure to follow when dealing with the spoken form of a living language whose orthographic and phonetic systems are mutually at variance. Moreover, since intonation is an integral part of the grammar of Spoken English, a liberal use has been made of tonetic signs.

(Palmer 1924b: xxxi–xxxii)

6.11 Promotion to lecturer

By 1921, Palmer had already established a reputation (overseas as well as in Britain) as a leading authority in the field of language teaching methodology, via publication of *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages* (1917b), *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921a), and *The Oral Method of Teaching Languages* (1921b). Despite his growing renown as a language teaching theorist,

Palmer's academic status and financial circumstances remained insecure until 1920, when he was finally awarded a full-time assistantship at UCL. For the 1921–22 session, during which he was to be invited to and in fact depart for Japan, Palmer was promoted to full-time lecturer status, and his salary was raised to £250 plus £30 per term for work at SOS (this work was advertised in the most explicit terms to date as constituting weekly 'Lectures on "Linguistics" as applied to the learning of Oriental Languages'³⁹: the scare quotes indicate the continuing novelty of this subject). Palmer's lectures on 'Theory of Language Study' at UCL were reinstated in the form of two term-long departmental courses for this session, being advertised as treating, respectively (i) 'The Nature of Language' and (ii) 'How to Study a Foreign Language without a Teacher' — a strikingly modern-sounding topic, but one which was fully consistent with Palmer's overall shift in concern from teaching to learning (often by missionaries in the field) during his time in London.

In the light of these apparent advancements, the question of why Palmer left for Japan early in 1922 is an interesting and important one. One consequence of his departure was, perhaps, the delay until 1957 of the (re-)establishment of 'applied linguistics' in a British academic setting (this having been the year in which the School of Applied Linguistics was founded at the University of Edinburgh). One reason for Palmer's departure may have been that his initial hopes of pioneering a reform of modern language teaching in British schools (as promoted by *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages* (1917b)) were not being fulfilled (indeed, this may have partly motivated the shift of emphasis which I have noted in his work in London towards offering insights for learners as well as teachers into the general study of languages, as opposed to the teaching of particular languages). Whether or not this was the case, the offer to Palmer in autumn 1921 of an advisory role to the Japanese government was gratefully received and accepted.

6.12 The invitation to Japan

In February 1922, Palmer left the University of London permanently, to take up a position created especially for him as 'linguistic adviser' to the Japanese

39 *University College Abridged Calendar for the Session 1921–22*, p. 45, in UCL archives.

Department (nowadays, Ministry) of Education. As Imura (1997: 28–40) describes in detail, he had received the invitation in autumn 1921 from a former Vice-Minister of Education, Sawayanagi Masataro (1865–1927), who had been visiting London in the course of a tour of inspection of European schools and universities. Sawayanagi was the leading Japanese educational figure of his age: he combined progressive leanings as a founder of the so-called ‘Taisho New Movement in Education’ with considerable prestige due both to his previous career and to his current status as president of the Imperial Society for Education (Teikoku kyoikukai), a nationwide organization of teachers (Mizuuchi 1989).

Sawayanagi, it seems, had himself been approached by Kinoshita Masao, a friend and colleague of Palmer’s at UCL (in the Department of Engineering) and SOS (Kinoshita was one of the first teachers of Japanese at that institution). Palmer and Kinoshita had collaborated at least since 1916 (when they had been working together on a Japanese Beginner’s Vocabulary (Palmer 1936c: 15)). Palmer’s interest in the Japanese language thus went some way back (example sentences in Japanese are presented in 1916a and parts of 1917b), and Anderson (1969: 143) notes how he had been ‘fascinated by all things connected with Japan’ since childhood. Indeed, Palmer’s own expressed desire to visit Japan may have motivated Kinoshita’s approach to Sawayanagi, although Palmer himself originally appears to have been considering taking only a year’s leave of absence in order to teach English or engage in a lecture tour.⁴⁰

In fact, Palmer was persuaded by Sawayanagi to leave the UCL Department of Phonetics for a three-year spell as *Eigokyoju komon* (‘Adviser on English Teaching Methods’) to the Japanese Department of Education. Sawayanagi retained close contacts and some influence with the Department of Education, and he proposed to Palmer and, it must be presumed, simultaneously or shortly afterwards to the Department in Japan that this special advisory position be created for him, with a brief to engage in research to develop reformed methods for the teaching of English in Japanese ‘middle’ (i.e. secondary) schools. Sawayanagi claims to have repeatedly stressed to Palmer that on arrival he should ‘inquire first into the history of English teaching in Japan and secondly [. . .] inspect the prevailing methods and

40 Palmer to Ichikawa Sanki, 11 September 1921 (as transcribed in Ichikawa 1961: 5–6).

their results, in the hope of ultimately devising some new methods which would be suitable to Japan', advising also that he 'might spend the whole period of three years in his research' (Sawayanagi 1924: 5). A wealthy businessman, Matsukata Kojiro, who was in London at the time, agreed to underwrite the venture, recommending (according to Stier 1950: 14) that Palmer should 'avoid entangling alliances [. . .] with government officials, teachers, publishers, university academicians, and even businessmen'. The politically aware advice of both Sawayanagi and Matsukata may be seen, then, to have been consistent with, and to have backed up Palmer's establishment of the independent Institute for Research in English Teaching, one year after his arrival in Japan. The prospect not only of an exotic location, considerable responsibility and commensurate pay but also of the independence promised to him and the opportunity to engage in research with definite reformist potential may have been the decisive factors in persuading Palmer to take up the invitation extended to him.

7 Principles in practice: Tokyo, 1922–27

7.1 The *hensoku* / *yakudoku* tradition in Japan

Although the beginnings of English studies in Japan are usually dated to the first decade of the nineteenth century, modern language study was generally the prerogative of only a few official translators and interpreters until Commodore Perry's 'black ships' from the USA forced Japan to open its doors to the outside world in 1853. Until then, the main languages studied were Chinese and Dutch rather than English (Omura 1978, Ike 1995).

Following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, however, English-medium instruction became the norm in universities and some schools (particularly in the 1870s), with large numbers of British and American teachers being hired to aid in the modernization of Japan via instruction in a variety of subjects.

Students read English textbooks in most of their classes, learning '*in* English and *through* English, but never *about* English' (Redman 1931: 79, emphasis in original). However, the Meiji Rescript on Education of 1890 ushered in a period of nationalism, and Japanese interest in practical foreign language learning declined. English became a compulsory *subject* on the curriculum, and teaching was increasingly geared towards the needs of examinations. Foreign teachers were largely replaced by Japanese teachers who were not always proficient in spoken English. In consequence, 'studying from Japanese textbooks and having infrequent contact with native speakers of English, [students] had reached the stage of learning *about* English in *Japanese*' (Bryant 1956: 25, emphasis in original).

The type of teaching which became established at this time, and which has continued to remain dominant, is often dismissed as 'grammar–translation', with no attempt being made to analyse it further. However, use of this label is misleading, since the grammar–translation 'method', first developed in Germany from the late eighteenth-century onwards (Howatt 1984: 131), does *not* appear to have been imported into Japan. Two main differences can be pointed out. Whereas late-nineteenth-century reformers in Europe (see 2.2 above) were particularly opposed to the use in grammar–translation of disconnected, often nonsensical sentences to

exemplify grammar rules, the materials used for core English teaching in Japanese schools have always tended to consist of reading texts or (at lower levels) dialogues, with the former being selected for their educative content. Secondly, whereas European grammar–translation involved translation both ways (from the mother tongue into the target language as well as vice versa), Japanese priorities have tended to focus on gaining information *from* English texts, not on encoding into English.

How, then, should we characterize the type of teaching which became established towards the end of the nineteenth century in Japan? Turning to contemporary writers, we find it being called *hensoku* (‘irregular’) and contrasted with more ‘regular’ *seisoku* teaching, which was associated with English-medium instruction or ‘teaching by conversation’ (see 7.2 below). In explanation of these terms, Omura (1978: 94) cites the following entries in Brinkley’s *Unabridged Japanese-English Dictionary* (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1896):

Seisoku, n. A method of learning a language by studying the correct pronunciation as well as the meaning (opposite of *hensoku*, which see).

Hensoku, n. A method of learning a foreign language which consists in translating the meaning without regard to the correct pronunciation of the words, and without paying much attention to the rules of syntax.

According to one critic of *hensoku*, Nitobe Inazo (1862–1933), ‘Its sole object is to get the sense of a sentence and therefore it gives no heed whatever [to] how a word sounds. If it is necessary to pronounce an English word [. . .] as little respect is paid to the pronunciation of the original as in the case of Kango’ (Nitobe 1929, cited by Omura 1978: 94).

Nitobe’s reference here to the teaching of *kango* (classical Chinese) is highly pertinent: teachers and students in the elite institutions where English was taught at the end of the nineteenth century already possessed considerable knowledge of *kanbun* (the Chinese classics). Syntactic similarities between classical Chinese and English were often exploited to aid learners in the understanding of English (Ike 1995: 7–8), and a particular technique derived from traditions of Chinese study was transferred to Dutch, then English studies. This *yakudoku* (literally, ‘translation-reading’) technique appears to have formed the centrepiece of

hensoku instruction: in essence, it involved the provision of literal word-for-word interlinear translations accompanied by a numbering system which enabled the student to reorder words in line with Japanese syntax (Kawasumi 1976; Hino 1988). Thus, 'the target language sentence [was] first translated word-by-word, and the resulting translation reordered to match Japanese word order' (Hino 1988: 46). The prevalence of this technique within *hensoku* is indicated by Okakura (1911, cited by Hino 1988: 51): 'In the teaching of English in our country, students are taught to translate word-by-word, with forward and regressive eye movements'.

Although *hensoku* was increasingly blamed for low English standards by progressive educators at the beginning of the twentieth century, some presented arguments in its favour. Thus, Nitobe (1929, cited by Omura 1978: 94–95) says 'It must be said to its praise that students who are trained in this way have usually much more accurate and precise comprehension of what they read than those who are taught to read parrot-like one sentence after another without thinking fully of the meaning'. Indeed, the spread and refinement of *hensoku* owed much to its early adoption by a widely-respected educational reformer, Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901), at his private school, Keio Gijuku, predecessor of the present Keio University (Omura 1978: 95).

The particular *yakudoku* translation procedure described above is generally employed these days only in examination-oriented 'cram schools' (*juku* or *yobiko*). However, the term '*yakudoku*' tends to be used nowadays in a more general sense, to refer to the overall focus on sentence-by-sentence translation of connected texts into Japanese which continues to be the mainstay of typical English teaching at all levels of formal education, in particular in senior high schools and universities.

Whether characterized (misleadingly) as 'grammar-translation' or described in its own terms as *hensoku* or (more commonly nowadays) *yakudoku*, the 'traditional' form of English teaching in Japan, with its roots in the teaching of classical Chinese, has proved remarkably resilient, despite its many critics, and despite, as we shall see, the efforts of Palmer and other reformers.

7.2 Previous attempts to reform English education in Japan

During the Meiji Era (1868–1912), solutions to domestic problems were often sought in the first instance in western models, although not without controversy. This approach was adapted to the reform of English language education as observers noted a worrying decline in standards of proficiency (accompanying the establishment of *hensoku*) towards the end of the nineteenth century. One reformist pattern was established early on, whereby Japanese scholars themselves visited western countries to report on the methods in use there. Around the turn of the century two well-known academics, Kanda Naibu (1857–1923) and Okakura Yoshisaburo (1868–1936), were sent on separate official tours of inspection to Europe, in particular Germany (which was the most favoured source of western ideas, generally, in the latter part of the Meiji Era). Kanda, who had attended university in the USA and was already a firm believer in the ‘Natural Method’, or ‘teaching by conversation’, as promoted there by Lambert Sauveur (see 2.1 above), was less favourable towards the German ‘New Method’ (see 2.2) than Okakura, finding little ‘new’ in it during his study tour of 1900–01 (Furber 1927: 58). On the other hand, Okakura, who spent 1902–05 in Europe, argued on his return that the German reformers did offer an instructive model for Japan, one which sufficiently emphasized the *educational*, not only utilitarian value of English teaching in schools. He expressed these views most forcefully in an original (1911) contribution entitled *Eigokyoiku* (English Language Education) (see Imura and Takenaka forthcoming). However, the defeat of Germany in World War I brought with it a collapse in esteem for German models and a shift in attention to Britain. Kanda’s and Okakura’s textbooks were widely-used and Okakura, in particular, met with some success in diffusing his ideas as head of the English department at the principal teacher training institution for secondary schools, Tokyo Higher Normal School (Imura 1994, 1997: 60). However, as the end of the Taisho Era (1912–26) approached, English teaching in schools had not changed very much overall, and standards of oral English in particular had been little improved.

Another predominant pattern of reform in the twentieth century involved inviting foreign ‘experts’ to Japan, as in the cases of Harold E. Palmer, Charles C. Fries (from 1956 onwards) and, with less emphasis on ‘expertise’, the present-day

JET Program(me). This pattern follows on from the early Meiji import of ‘hired foreigners’ to which I have already referred. Harold E. Palmer was the first and by far the most significant of these foreign reformers.

7.3 Palmer’s initial activities

Palmer had just turned forty-five when his ship arrived in Kobe, on 27 March 1922 (Imura 1997: 43).¹ Later he was to publish excerpts from his diary of the journey in a textbook for Japanese middle school students (1932y: 41–66), and these show that he had travelled by train to Marseilles, then by ship via the Suez Canal, Colombo (Ceylon), Singapore and Hong Kong. After a week in Nagasaki, where he visited W. Rudolf F. Stier, an American teacher employed by the YMCA who had previously corresponded with him on the need for reform in Japanese English education (as described in Stier 1950), Palmer travelled to Tokyo, and on 24 April he was officially appointed to the post of *eigokyoju komon* (Adviser on English Teaching Methods, or, as Palmer preferred to describe himself, ‘Linguistic Adviser’) at the Department of Education. Given his own office in the Department, he was left free to pursue his investigations, under the nominal supervision of a committee composed largely of academics (Imura 1997: 46).

During this initial period Palmer was working on the final draft of *A Grammar of Spoken English* (see 6.8 above), which was eventually published in 1924 in England (Imura 1997: 46–47). He also began to engage in a number of school visits and lectures. His ‘debut’ series of twice-weekly lectures at Tokyo Imperial University on ‘Modern Methods of Language Teaching’ (May–June) attracted very large audiences of middle school teachers. These lectures were reported objectively and in some detail between July and October in the most widely-read magazine for English teachers in Japan at the time, *Eigo Seinen* (*The Rising Generation*) (Ozasa 1995a: 91–98). There were also well-attended lecture

1 Both Imura (1997) and Ozasa (1995a, b) constitute important secondary sources, as acknowledged in the text, for the account of Palmer’s work in Japan presented in this and the following chapter. However, my main sources have been back issues of the IRET *Bulletin* (reproduced in IRLT 1985), along with (other) published writings by Palmer, letters and other documents in PFVA, and newspaper articles, for example in *The Japan Chronicle*.

courses during the summer in Osaka (on ‘Scientific Principles of the Study and Teaching of Foreign Languages’ and ‘How to Teach the Sounds of the English Language’) and in Karuizawa (Ozasa 1995b: 252). In the autumn, Palmer mainly spoke at the Tokyo Higher Normal School, the foremost teacher-training institution in Japan. Titles of his lecture series there (all reported in *Eigo Seinen*) included ‘Theory and Practice of Speaking Exercises’, ‘A Method for Teaching the First Year within a Vocabulary Limit of 500 Words’ and ‘Phonetic Methods and Listening Exercises’ (my translations of the Japanese titles provided in Ozasa 1995b: 252). In all of these lectures, Palmer appears to have refrained from making specific recommendations for the Japanese English teaching situation, preferring instead to stay at the level of generalities, repeating ideas from his previously published works which ‘might serve to help him and his future work to be understood’ (Sawayanagi 1924: 5). Certain ‘non-negotiables’ do emerge from these lectures, however, including the importance of ‘thinking in English’ (as opposed to mentally translating into or from English), the value of teaching language as ‘Speech’ rather than as ‘Code’ (see below), the value of phonetics to language teachers, and the importance generally of ‘oral work’ in the classroom (see Ozasa 1995a: 91–107).

Even though, at this early stage, he refrained from making specific proposals for reform, Palmer’s ideas and presentation style failed to meet with universal acclaim. There was resistance, for example, from Okakura Yoshisaburo, previously the doyen of English teacher education (and English teaching reform) in Japan, and certain of his disciples (Imura 1997: 59–62 discusses Okakura and his relationship with Palmer in detail; see also 7.2 above); there was opposition, also, from a more maverick reformer, Muko Gunji, who took the Department of Education to task in a public lecture in October for having invited Palmer to be its adviser (Imura 1997: 54–56).

In the same month (October), Palmer was invited by the ‘Society for Promoting the Japanese System of Romanization’ to give a single lecture in Tokyo, which the Society was quick to publish in pamphlet form (1922c). As I have already noted, Palmer’s interest in Japanese predated the invitation to Japan by some years, while Romanization (according to phonetic principles) of languages written in non-Roman script was an area of ongoing research in Jones’s Department of Phonetics

(Collins 1988: 353). Palmer retained a special interest in the Romanization of Japanese throughout his years in Japan, later publishing an impressive study of the practical as well as phonemic issues involved (*The Principles of Romanization*, 1930n). In his 1922c pamphlet, Palmer lent his support to the Japanese (as opposed to the Hepburnian) system of Romanization on phonemic grounds, although in 1930n he was to adopt a less partisan position.

From 2 December Palmer began to teach occasionally (and experimentally) at a prestigious Girls' School, Joshi Gakushuin (The Peeress' School), continuing to do so until February 1927 (Ono 1988). It is likely to have been in the first instance for his teaching here that he developed the 'sequential series' of questions and answers which found their way into two book-length publications in 1923 (Palmer 1923b, c). The early months of 1923 saw Palmer travel further afield, for lectures in Kumamoto and Kagoshima in Kyushu (Ozasa 1995a: 113). There was also a talk on 10 February at the Osaka Municipal Public Hall under the auspices of Nitto Gramophone Records Ltd., which had secured his services for the recording of existing textbook materials. A transcript of this talk was published in June under the title *To the Japanese Students of English* (Palmer 1923e). In March, Palmer's wife (Elisabeth), seventeen-year-old daughter (Dorothee) and three-year-old son (Tristram) arrived in Japan, and soon afterwards Dorothee started teaching at the Furuya English School for Girls in Osaka, where she was to try out many of the 'oral ostensive' ideas which later found their way into *English through Actions* (1925c), co-authored with her father. Elisabeth also found employment late in 1923 as a part-time French teacher at the Peeress' School (Imura 1997: 258).

In sum, Palmer's initial activities in Japan were confined largely to background research of a somewhat individualistic, theoretical or linguistic nature (leading to two major publications in 1924: *A Grammar of Spoken English* (1924b) and the *Memorandum on Problems of English Teaching* (1924a): see below), combined, however, with some school visits and teaching and numerous public lectures. At the same time, however, he had set in motion moves to establish a firm institutional foundation for reform-oriented research, as will be discussed in the following section.

7.4 The establishment of IRET

The first half of 1923 saw the establishment of the Institute for Research in English Teaching (IRET), which was to become the main focus and conduit for diffusion of Palmer's work in Japan. The impetus for the establishment of the Institute did not come from within the Department of Education (as Redman's (1966, 1967a, b) accounts suggest) but from a small, largely non-Japanese group of Palmer's supporters, with his own approval, and perhaps even at his instigation. The most active of these supporters, W. Rudolf F. Stier of the YMCA, was later to claim, indeed, that the idea for an Institute first germinated in the course of conversations with himself and other non-Japanese colleagues during Palmer's very first week in Japan (Stier 1948: 8). Whether or not this was the case, it is clear that their suggestions for collaborative research met with Palmer's full approval. As is reported in the first issue of the IRET *Bulletin*, 'on February 19th, 1923 a group of Mr Palmer's friends on their own initiative called on him at his house', and at the ensuing meeting formally drew up a resolution to create 'An Association for the Promotion of Research in English Teaching', in the first instance to meet the 'immediate need' of 'compilation, printing and distribution of various types of English Language Courses', in order to encourage existing reform efforts and to provide an impetus to 'research and experimental work' on the basis of their use.²

Although dominated initially by its original non-Japanese members, this small association was rapidly converted, at their own request, into a fully-fledged Japanese institution. As the concept of an independent 'Research Institute' seemed to correspond well with their initial advice to Palmer, Matsukata was quick to provide additional financial backing, and Sawayanagi, Palmer's principal 'mentor', was equally prompt to gain Department of Education approval for the new venture. Sawayanagi also persuaded a number of prominent, reform-minded academics as well as a Department of Education representative to serve on a Board of Administration which he agreed personally to chair. Later, the Minister of Education himself was prevailed upon to become the Institute's Honorary President (Imura 1997: 62–63, 76). Permission was also granted for the Institute to operate

2 Anonymous report titled 'History of the Institute for Research in English Teaching', in *Bulletin* 1/1 (1 June 1923), pp. 2–3 (these quotations, p. 2).

from Palmer's premises within the Department of Education, a factor which helped to assure the prestige of its activities in the eyes of Japanese teachers, even though it was always to remain, by statute and in the tone of its activities, an independent, or, as Palmer (1934r: 1) preferred to describe it, a 'semi-official' body. In sum, it was the desire of Palmer's reform-minded supporters and mentors, as well as, in all likelihood, himself that the Institute should be 'sufficiently unofficial to be unhampered by red-tape and yet so closely in touch with the Department of Education that its findings should receive the maximum of official support' (Palmer, 1934r: 2).

At the end of May 1923 the Institute for Research in English Teaching (IRET) formally came into being. Palmer was appointed Director and approval was given for the setting-up of an administrative committee composed of the original founding members. Japanese office staff were appointed and the full-time services of Stier were secured from his employer, the YMCA, which not only continued to pay his salary but also agreed to print the Institute's publications, with no regard to profit. The first issue of the IRET *Bulletin*, announcing the establishment of the Institute and appealing for new members, appeared on 1 June 1923. The output of Palmer's writings, most of them published under IRET auspices but printed and distributed by Kaitakusha (the YMCA Press), was henceforth to increase dramatically.

IRET's first (1923a–c) publications were books of questions and answers designed for rapid-fire oral work in the classroom. Two newspaper articles Palmer wrote in the same year, on 'Snap work' (1923d) and 'The clean stroke' (1923f) also emphasized the need for rapidity in remedial work so that students develop 'right speech-habits' with no time for mental translation. These books and articles appear to have been intended for non-Japanese teachers rather than Japanese teachers unsure of their own oral English abilities. As Palmer (1923g: 4) himself stressed, they served to meet the demands of the foreign teachers (many of them associated with the YMCA chain of language schools) who had provided IRET's initial support-base.

At the same time, Palmer was keen to emphasize (for example, in his (1923e) address to Japanese students) that further research and practical experimentation would be needed before specific methodological proposals could

be made for the Japanese context: ‘exactly what the new methods are likely to be we do not yet know [. . .] we must enquire into all the problems [. . .], we must experiment’ (Palmer 1923e: 23). As he emphasized in this lecture, Palmer clearly intended the IRET to be a genuine research institute, and not simply (*pace* Yamamoto 1978) a conduit for the diffusion of ideas from his already formulated ‘Oral Method’. This ‘experimental’ orientation is clear, also, in the sub-title of Palmer’s (1923b, c) *The Sequential Series* publications: ‘An experimental course designed specifically for the forming of right speech-habits’. Although 1923a and 1923b/c were presented initially as self-contained ‘courses’ (with *The Sequential Series* even being termed ‘The Palmer English Language Course’ in its first edition), a description of these texts in the first issue of IRET’s *Bulletin*, which was sent to members soon after their publication, stresses that they should be conceived of rather as elements within just one possible ‘Line of Approach’, that termed the ‘Oral Contextual’ (p. 8). This was to involve ‘conventional conversation’ procedures whereby questions are easily answerable from background knowledge and necessary language for the answer is provided in the question itself.

Within IRET, research groups had rapidly been established to develop materials not only for this and the ‘Oral Ostensive’ line of approach (Stier, then J.V. Martin were to contribute ideas in the latter area before this work was taken over by Dorothée Palmer), but also to investigate the ‘Problem of pronunciation divergencies among teachers of English in Japan’.³ In this latter area, given Palmer’s own beliefs in the importance of pronunciation and the value of phonetics in language teaching, a major problem which confronted the Institute in its first year was whether Received Pronunciation (RP) or an American standard should be the model in the Japanese context. A special issue of the *Bulletin* edited by Stier (number 2 of the ‘New Series’ established after the Great Kanto Earthquake — see below) was devoted to this problem, with Palmer presenting several ‘Possible Solutions’ (in a 1923i editorial) alongside views elicited from Daniel Jones and other, mostly non-Japanese contributors. Palmer’s later pronunciation dictionary with American variants (1926t) was one outcome of this early debate among non-Japanese teachers, and in the Preface to that work, Palmer recalls how on arriving in

3 Anonymous report titled ‘Summer study plans’ in *Bulletin* 1/2 (1 July 1923), p. 1.

Japan 'and thereby coming into very close contact with the not inconsiderable American population here' he had been surprised that American teachers themselves tended to speak in RP and to see this as 'Good Pronunciation'. For the 1926t dictionary he claims to have taken the initiative in proposing the column entitled 'American variants', despite protests from various American friends and correspondents.

Whereas the IRET's first (1923) publications, under the dominant influence of Stier, had been designed, it would appear, to meet the needs of non-Japanese as much as Japanese teachers, the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1 September 1923, effectively resulted in the further Japanization of IRET activities (Palmer 1934a: 3). At first there was a hiatus, with the earthquake putting a temporary stop to all IRET operations (Palmer and his family were at a safe distance, on holiday in Karuizawa, but many Institute documents, including membership lists and all copies of a forthcoming publication, *A Catalogue of Weakenable Words of the English Language* (1923h), were destroyed in the ensuing fires). Stier was then recalled by his employers to the USA, and from December a new, Japanese Executive Secretary (Omura Masura) was put in charge of Institute administration.

Following on from this, Palmer began to take more of a lead in IRET activities, and the needs of Japanese teachers began to be better addressed. Thus, in December, Palmer established several sub-committees composed mainly of Japanese members and instigated a survey to establish, in particular, the aims and problems of English teaching in the middle school context (Imura 1997: 70). After completing his *Memorandum on Problems of English Teaching* (1924a) at the end of 1923, he was also to set about writing a variety of teaching manuals and learning materials aimed at Japanese as much as non-Japanese teachers of English, in order to reflect in concrete form the 'multiple lines of approach' indicated as available in that document. Together, these publications were intended to form a 'Standard Course of English composed specially for use in Japanese schools', a course which would not be centred on a particular (reading) text but assembled by teachers themselves, in the light of local needs and with the aid of IRET resources (Palmer and Palmer, D. 1925c: 5, 8). The *Memorandum* and the 'Standard Course' to which it gave rise will be considered in some detail in the following two sections.

Between May and October 1923, Palmer had continued to travel extensively in Japan, giving lectures and consulting with teachers in Hokkaido, Kyoto, Fukuoka (in Kyushu), Kagawa and Tokushima (in Shikoku), and Hiroshima (Ozasa, 1995a: 114–15). The most important speaking engagement came on 10 December, when Palmer presented the results of his deliberations over the preceding year and a half, in the form of a lecture to a select group of prominent Japanese educationalists, under the title ‘The teaching of English in the light of a new theory of linguistics’ (the theory in question being that of Saussure). The ninety-five-page *Memorandum* presented the contents of this lecture in pamphlet form.

7.5 *The Memorandum on Problems of English Teaching*

The publication of the *Memorandum on Problems of English Teaching* at the beginning of 1924 marked a definitive end to Palmer’s initial period of relatively individualistic activity in Japan. This was a document of some importance both in global, applied linguistic terms (for the way it combines pedagogical implications with an original interpretation of Saussure’s (1916) distinction between *langue* and *parole*) and, in local terms, for its conceptualization of ‘multiple lines of approach’ for further research, and ultimately reform, in the Japanese context.

It seems clear that, although the *Memorandum* has hitherto received little attention from western scholars, it constitutes an important development of Palmer’s previous, more widely appreciated thinking on the nature of the relationship between theory and practice (in *The Scientific Study* (1917b) and *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921a)). Thus, the ‘multiple line of approach’ conception which is simply sketched out in the latter work (pp. 161–69) is expounded more concretely in the *Memorandum*, being more firmly connected with a theory of second language acquisition which itself appears to represent a significant development of that contained in *The Principles of Language-Study*. Palmer bases his suggestions on an interpretation of Saussure’s differentiation between *langue* and *parole*, wedding to this a distinction based on contemporary speech psychology between ‘Primary’ and ‘Secondary’ Speech Circuits.

The *Memorandum* provided Palmer himself, as we shall see below, with clear justifications and directions for practical research and development in the Japanese context, presenting a 'scientifically based' model which emphasized the need to develop a number of 'Speech habits' for enhancement of the ability to 'think in English' (whether in the spoken or the written medium) but which at the same time, and within these limits, allowed for an eclectic range of possible teaching procedures ('Forms of Work'), potentially encompassing 'grammar and structure' work (for production), reading and writing, as well as listening and speaking.

7.6 From the *Memorandum* to the 'Standard English Course'

During his initial period in Japan, Palmer appears to have been working towards a 'scientifically based' conception of language teaching which would nevertheless be flexible enough to allow for eclectic interpretation by individual teachers, in particular contexts. Directions for further research and development had now been clearly indicated with the *Memorandum*'s characterization of different, theoretically justified 'lines of approach' for experimental materials design and teaching, and ultimately reform in the Japanese context. After completing *A Grammar of Spoken English* (1924b) and the *Memorandum*, Palmer embarked on an ambitious programme of experimental materials-writing, which resulted in an eclectic variety of 1924 and (especially) 1925 IRET publications. These materials were aimed at Japanese as much as non-Japanese teachers of English, and were designed to reflect in concrete form the 'multiple lines of approach' indicated as available in the *Memorandum*.

Let us turn now to the teaching and learning materials issued by the Institute in 1924–25. With its earliest (1923a–c) publications, IRET had already made a start in the intended compilation of various types of courses in order to encourage existing reform efforts and to provide an impetus to research and experimental work on the basis of their use. Now this work was to be accelerated, with a greater variety of possible lines of approach being deliberately and systematically catered for.

The first of the materials to be published on the basis of the directions indicated in the *Memorandum* was *Systematic Exercises in English Sentence-Building* (1924d) (a collection of substitution and analysis tables with exercises and suggestions for classroom procedure), this being related specifically to the 'Grammar and Structure Line of Approach'. As is indicated in the sub-title of this work, it constituted one part of what was by now being projected as a 'Standard Course of English composed specially for use in Japanese schools'. This was envisaged as a course which would be assembled by teachers themselves, in the light of local needs and with the aid of whichever IRET resources seemed most appropriate to them (Palmer and Palmer, D. 1925c: 5, 8). The 'Standard Course' conception was therefore consistent not only with the *Memorandum's* emphasis on 'multiple lines of approach' but also with IRET's originally formulated aim of encouraging existing reform efforts by individual teachers and providing an impetus to research and experimental work. Universal adoption, then, was not necessarily predicted at this still early stage.

Palmer's output of publications increased dramatically in 1925, and was to increase still further in the following two years (reaching a peak in 1927). In rapid succession, manuals or learning materials corresponding to the following lines of approach were added in 1925 to the 'Standard English Course':

- Oral Ostensive (*English through Actions* (1925c), co-written with Dorothée Palmer);
- Reader (*A Standard English Reader for Beginners* (1925d));
- Grammar and Structure (*Systematic Exercises in English Sentence-Building. Stage II* (1925g), a sequel to 1924d);
- Writing (*Graded Exercises in English Composition. Book I (Part I)* (1925o)); and
- Pronunciation (*Progressive Exercises in the English Phones* (1925p)).

An anonymous 'Official Report for the Year 1924–1925', probably written by Palmer himself, provides an overview of the year's publications and indicates the way his attention was turning increasingly towards the 'Reader' Line of Approach.⁴

Despite the concessions which were beginning to be made to reading and writing in the above learning materials, there was still a major focus in other 1925 publications on providing teachers and students with background information relating to the spoken language, specifically conversation (1925b) and pronunciation (1925e, j–l, n, s).

7.7 Lectures and other engagements (1924–26)

In January, June and December 1924, Palmer served as an examiner for English Teacher's License examinations, in Tokyo (apart from this work, very few 'official' duties appear to have been required of him by the Department of Education, throughout his stay in Japan). There were also lectures in Kyoto (at the end of January), Kobe and Nagano (in February), and Osaka (in April and May) (Ozasa 1995a: 115–16). On 1 April Palmer's office, and with it the Institute, was moved to a new location inside a temporary Department of Education building at Kanda-bashi (Imura 1997: 258).

In December 1924 Palmer was given the prestigious task of tutoring the Emperor's son, Prince Chichibu (brother of the future 'Showa Emperor', Hirohito), who was preparing for a study visit to England which was to include instruction in the UCL Department of Phonetics (Imura 1997: 82). Palmer carried out his duties in this area until May 1925, and was to report on the experience in 1925f.

Lecture venues in 1925 included a seminar for English teachers in Fukui (12–15 June) and the 'University Extension Summer School' in Karuizawa, 10–14 August (Ozasa 1995a: 117). On the latter occasion there was also a staged (1925n, s) discussion 'on phonetics' between Palmer, F.W. Brown (who had advised Palmer on recent developments in speech psychology), J. Victor Martin and Naganuma Naoe (a teacher of Japanese as a foreign language with excellent English abilities, whose services as a translator Palmer was increasingly to depend upon; Naganuma

4 *Bulletin* 19 (Nov.–Dec. 1925): 7–8.

was also, in 1927, to purchase Kaitakusha from the YMCA and thus become IRET's publisher).

Lectures given by Palmer in the first half of 1926 included a 23–25 January series on 'The techniques of English teaching' in Tokyo (summarized in 1926b), further lectures in Tokyo in March and a speaking engagement at the office of the *Osaka Mainichi* newspaper (Palmer appears to have entertained good relations with the staff of the English edition of this newspaper, which had published several short pieces written by him (for example, 1923d, f and 1925f) and secured his cooperation in the revision of English publications including Futara and Sawada 1926). In March, Palmer also undertook a lecture tour of Korea and Manchuria (Ozasa 1995a: 118–19).

In the summer of 1926 Palmer and his family returned home for the first time since their arrival in Japan, leaving Tokyo on 5 June and travelling on the Trans-Siberian Express. While he was in England, Palmer submitted a short article (1926s) to the *Daily Mail* on what he saw at the time as the positive Japanese attitude towards England [*sic*] and the English language, whose dominance in Japan (at the expense of some more neutral alternative) he nevertheless seemed, to some extent, to regret.⁵

On 8 September the family left Britain for the USA, where Palmer met Edward Sapir (as recorded in 1927b) and made the acquaintance of Ben D. Wood at Columbia University. Palmer was subsequently to incorporate Wood's ideas on objective testing into suggestions for reform of English examinations in the Japanese context. Thus, in November he presented a memorandum on the subject to a meeting of the IRET Board of Administration, the substance of which was later published as 1927s; he also composed and published examples of 'new type' objective examinations', with a view to encouraging reform in this area (see 1926y and 1927d).

Palmer and his family left from San Francisco on 28 September, and their arrival in Yokohama is dated 14 October by Imura (1997: 259). Soon after Palmer's return to Japan, on 20 October, there was another attack on him by Muko Gunji, this time in written form (Muko 1926; see also Imura 1997: 259). The Third IRET

5 On 26 August Palmer also gave a talk for the BBC on 'Manchurian Adventures' (*The Times*, 26 August 1926).

Convention was held from 21 to 23 October at Nihon Seinen Kaikan (the Japanese Youth Hall), and Palmer himself commented on this Convention in 1926w. In December, following the publication of his paper on the subject (1926x, itself an extension of work in *A Grammar of Spoken English* (1924b: 264–70)), Palmer gave a two-and-a-half hour lecture at Tokyo Higher Normal School on the grammatical peculiarities of the ‘Anomalous Finites’ (Ozasa 1995a: 118–19).

7.8 ‘Campaigning’ IRET Conventions (1924–25)

Let us now retrace our steps to survey developments within IRET itself in 1924–25 which linked in with Palmer’s assumption of a more active role in reform. By the beginning of 1924, 186 Japanese, 272 non-Japanese and 37 overseas members had been registered as belonging to the Institute (Imura 1997: 76), and this total of 495 had risen to more than 700 by the time of the First IRET Convention, in October of the same year. This Convention was organized for 17–18 October 1924 at Seijo School (of which Sawayanagi was Principal), and was attended by over 300 members and other participants.⁶ J. Victor Martin gave two demonstration lessons to students from Aoyama Gakuin Middle School, using materials from *Thinking in English* (1923a) and a prototype of *English through Actions* (1925c). In the second lesson Martin displayed ‘oral ostensive’ procedures including imperative drill and action chains which were later to be presented and explained in detail in the latter work (Ozasa 1995a: 40). In his address to the Convention (1924g), as in an earlier (1924e) editorial in the *Bulletin* (for which he had now taken on full editorial responsibility), Palmer emphasized the need for reform in English teaching, in general terms.

The central focus of reformist activity in 1925 was the Second IRET Convention, held at Aoyama Kaikan in Tokyo, 19–21 November. By this time the total membership had risen to 761, with the Convention itself being attended by 314 teachers and educationists.⁷ The proportion of Japanese to non-Japanese members may be assumed to have risen by this time, although precise figures are unavailable.

6 Anonymously written ‘Board of Administration report’, *Bulletin* 8 (Oct.–Nov. 1924): 2–3.

7 Details from *Bulletin* 19 (Nov.–Dec. 1925), p. 8 and inside front cover.

Palmer's original three-year period of employment was to have come to an end in March 1925, and, although it is clear that at some stage he decided (and was given approval) to continue with his work in Japan, his original intention had always been to present a report containing specific recommendations to the Japanese Department of Education at the end of this three-year period. However, as we have seen, his own and the Institute's engagement with the specific, local needs of Japanese secondary school teachers had been somewhat late in starting, and it was not until the autumn of 1925 that, together, Palmer and the Institute appear to have been ready to present concrete recommendations, in response to an explicit request for suggestions from the Department of Education.

Palmer evidently 'primed' the Convention somewhat, in particular with his 1925i editorial on the need for reform in entrance examinations and his own address to the Convention (1925u), and it seems clear that he drafted many of the proposals for debate himself; however, decisions appear to have been reached collectively and democratically, both at and after the Convention, with the voices of Japanese participants being fully heard and the Board of Administration playing an active role. At this Convention, the Institute seems to have gone beyond its original remit (to engage in methodological research and experimentation) and it proposed a somewhat radical (and, in the light of subsequent developments, unrealistic) four-point programme for structural reform, involving smaller class sizes, increased freedom in textbook selection, organization of in-service teacher training by the Department, and more effective utilization of native speaker teachers.

There were also strong calls for university entrance examinations to be reformed to involve 'plain English' (as referred to by Palmer in 1925t) and the testing of English as 'Speech' (i.e. direct testing of listening, speaking, reading and writing) in counterweight to translation tasks. A number of general recommendations related to the need for teaching aims to be revised to emphasize the ability to 'think in English' without recourse to translation and for proficiency in the spoken language to be highlighted as a goal. General ideas for teaching procedures were also offered, reflecting the views on second language acquisition expressed previously in Palmer's *Memorandum* (Ozasa 1995a: 70–75). Aside from the latter recommendations on methodology, none of these proposals would today be considered particularly controversial by the majority of Japanese teachers. With

few exceptions, indeed, they continue to represent major goals of contemporary (Japanese) reformers associated with *Kaizenkyo* (the Association for Improvement in Foreign Language Education). In other words, they have still not been (comprehensively) implemented.

The 1925 Convention's response to the Ministry's request was not Palmer's alone but appears to have been drawn up on the basis of extensive consultations and discussions within the Board of Administration and among IRET members prior to and at the Convention. As a result of these 'political' deliberations, IRET perhaps began to be seen, for a period of about three years (Ozasa 1995a: 69–89), as a forum for the discussion of reform proposals which would go beyond the 'merely' methodological. In December, the Institute's Board of Administration submitted its proposals to the Minister of Education, thus partially fulfilling Palmer's mission as initially conceived.

However, the IRET Convention's proposals for structural reform in 1925 and the following three years were largely ignored by the Department of Education, despite the publicly expressed support they gained from the increasing numbers of Japanese teachers associated with the Institute. This, doubtless, was a source of continuing frustration to Palmer (cf. 1938d: 218), but was perhaps only to be predicted by those more familiar with the workings of the Japanese bureaucracy, including, presumably, Sawayanagi and Matsukata themselves. It can reasonably be assumed that *without* the back-up of the Institute, similar suggestions made by Palmer individually in his capacity as 'linguistic adviser to the Department' would have had even less impact. Between 1925 and 1928 it must have become increasingly apparent to him that his reforming efforts would have little effect unless targeted directly at teachers through the Institute, as opposed to via the Department's more labyrinthine channels.

7.9 The 'Reader System'

As the perceived needs of Japanese teachers increasingly began to be addressed within IRET, an important development seems to have occurred in Palmer's own thinking which was to contribute to a quite radical change of direction in IRET publication and research activities, with wider (international) consequences.

Already in his report to the 1925 Convention (1925u), and, more specifically, in a February 1926 article in the *Bulletin* (1926e), Palmer had indicated a shift away from the previous 'Standard Course' conception and towards a 'Reader System', whereby a textbook containing various passages for reading would form the core around which a variety of 'Speech-habit' building (including both oral and writing) activities could be ranged, with the support of 'satellite' publications. This coincided with an increasing recognition on Palmer's part that the primary overall goals of English teaching in the Japanese context were generally considered to be literacy-oriented, with 'conversation' being considered to be of only superficial value. These developments may be seen to have derived from Palmer's growing understanding of the Japanese secondary school context, where the textbook (approved by the Department, now Ministry, of Education) still constitutes the focus of teaching in almost all subjects, and where the emphasis in first as well as second language education and, importantly, university entrance examinations involving these subjects has always tended to be on the written language. The shift in emphasis which was to occur in Palmer's and IRET's pedagogical suggestions and publications away from their initial concentration on the spoken language did not mean that oral work ever lost its central place, however. On the contrary, Palmer was always keen to emphasize (in contrast with the 'reading first' approach propounded by Michael West and devotees of the increasingly dominant 'Reading Method' in the USA: see 3.2 above) that a basis of oral work constituted the only methodologically sound approach to the development of second language literacy skills. Indeed, as early as February 1926, Palmer discussed a technique which he later termed 'oral introduction' (involving initial oral presentation of Reader contents), and which was to become a cornerstone of the IRET approach, as increasingly appropriated and adapted by Japanese teachers in the ensuing and, indeed, post-war years (Palmer 1926e: 3).

In 1926 and 1927, then, IRET put into place its 'Reader System', issuing over this period ten volumes (for the five years of middle school) of 'Standard English Readers' authored by Palmer: 1926h, k (both incorporating material from 1925d), 1926m, 1927e, j, w and ee-hh). All ten volumes were to be submitted for Department of Education approval, alongside textbooks of other publishers, by the

end of March 1928, in time for the 1928–29 school year.⁸ The first four books were accompanied by a variety of innovative supplementary materials to support teachers' engagement in oral work, including a version of the first volume in phonetic notation (1926j), books of questions and answers based on the contents of the texts (1926i, u, v, 1927aa), and records issued simultaneously by Nitto Gramophone Company. There were also complementary books of graded exercises in written composition intended to replace traditional Japanese to English translation exercises (1925o, 1926g, 1927g, k; answer keys to these were later published as 1928e and 1930f).

The end of January 1927 saw a lecture tour in Kyushu (Ozasa 1995a: 119–20), in the course of which Palmer may have first met A.S. Hornby, who had arrived in Japan to take up a college teaching post in Oita in 1924 (see Appendix 8.1). On 22 February, Palmer's daughter Dorothée married a British businessman, Basil Anderson, in Tokyo (Imura, 1997: 259); subsequently, they were to move to Shanghai. February also saw the submission to the Minister of Education of the proposals which had been decided upon at the previous year's Third Annual Convention. These were considerably more restricted in scope than those of the 1925 Convention, relating mainly to the need to begin the five-year middle school English course with oral work (Ozasa 1995a: 75).

May saw the publication of Fujimura Tsukuru's *Eigokahaishi no kyumu* (On the Urgent Need to Abolish English as a Subject in the Curriculum), which was to be the spark for increasingly strident, nationalistically motivated calls for the reduction or abolition of English teaching in middle schools over the coming years (Kawasumi 1979; Imura 1997: 108–12). Palmer responded soon afterwards with (1927x and 1927bb) editorials which diplomatically emphasized the need to focus on the quality, not the quantity of instruction in English, but from around this time onwards IRET's efforts were to be undertaken against a background of increasing hostility to the teaching of English. On 28 May, Palmer spoke on English teaching methods at the Spring Convention of the English Teachers' Association in Tokyo Prefecture, while from 25 July to 3 August there were two series of lectures at the Karuizawa Summer School, on 'Reformed Teaching of English' and 'Teaching in

⁸ This approval was granted on 31 March 1928 according to the bibliographical endpieces in several later editions of the 'Standard Readers' in the IRLT Library.

the Middle Grade Schools' (Ozasa 1995a: 119–20). A Supplement to the *Bulletin* (1928j) later based on one of these lectures provides evidence (along with 1927i) of Palmer's new-found acceptance that an appropriate reformist rallying cry should be 'Let us teach [students] to read English extensively and to write it accurately' (p. 2), and that 'The nucleus of the Reform Programme is the "Reader"' (p. 5). These modifications to his original expectations on coming to Japan are combined, however, with a continuing attachment to the priority of oral procedures (based on the reading text and aiming at the development of effective 'Speech-Learning Habits', as clarified in 1927c).

From 13 to 18 October IRET organized its own teacher-training course, for the first time (Palmer's lectures for this course are summarized in 1927dd). The course was held at Tokyo Higher Normal School to coincide with the Fourth IRET Convention, held at the same venue from 17 to 19 October.⁹ On 24 December Sawayanagi Masataro, who, more than anyone else, had been responsible for bringing Palmer to Japan and guiding his activities, died, and Sakurai Joji took over as Chairman of the IRET Board of Administration (Imura 1997: 259).

In 1927, Palmer's most productive year in terms of number of publications (there are thirty-four separate writings for this year in the bibliography at the end of this thesis), most of his energies were directed at putting into place the 'Reader System' in time for the following school year. However, he also found time to elaborate part of his theory of second language acquisition (1927c), to provide further advice to teachers embarking on the use of 'reformed methods' (1927o, p, u, y, dd), to offer additional practical suggestions for the writing of examinations (1927d, s), and, finally, to publicize both the 'Reader System' conception itself, and his acceptance of the aim of foreign language literacy, both of which he felt had not been fully appreciated by teachers resistant to reform who continued to associate his and the Institute's suggestions only with pronunciation, 'conversation' and/or the Oral Method (1927i, p–r, z).

9 Anonymous report on 'The Fourth Annual Conference of English Teachers', *Bulletin* 39 (Nov.–Dec. 1927): 4–6.

7.10 Achievements and frustrations (1922–27)

By the spring of 1927, Palmer had been in Japan for five years, and believed that significant progress had been made in clarifying appropriate (literacy-oriented) aims of English teaching in Japan, in identifying ‘scientifically based’ and (yet) apparently appropriate means to be used in order to attain these aims, and, through the establishment of the Institute, in replacing previous factionalism with a focused reform movement (Palmer 1927i: 3). (Indeed, in a retrospective account (Palmer, 1933q), he was to emphasize the latter as having been *the* major achievement of the previous ten years.) Nevertheless, misunderstandings, he felt, had plagued his own and IRET’s efforts at every stage of the way (Palmer 1927i: 3), while the Department of Education had failed to heed successive IRET Convention proposals for top-down reform. What may, perhaps, have seemed even worse (although Palmer was careful not to involve himself overmuch in this political debate), nationalistically motivated calls for the reduction or even abolition of English teaching in middle-schools appeared to be growing apace (Kawasumi 1979; Imura 1997: 108–12). Palmer’s (1927i) *The Reformed English Teaching in the Middle-grade Schools* represents, then, a definitive and authoritative-sounding restatement of principles which had been worked out over the five years he had been in Japan, with regard, it is clear, to Japanese colleagues’ opinions, and with a view not only to learning theory but, over the preceding two years, in particular, also to the (perceived) constraints of the existing education system; at the same time, it seems to sound a note of completion, complementing the successful establishment of the ‘Reader System’ by the end of the year. It is as if Palmer is saying to Japanese teachers and the education authorities: this is what IRET has developed for you; now it’s your responsibility to understand it correctly and to make it your own!

8 An established authority: Tokyo, 1928–36

8.1 Appropriation of Palmer's ideas by Japanese teachers

Sawayanagi Masataro, who had done more than anyone else to bring Palmer to Japan and to provide him and the Institute with guidance, had died in December 1927. His ultimate hope for Palmer had been that he would succeed in developing 'new methods which would be suitable to Japan'. How much progress had in fact been made, or was still to be made towards this ultimate goal when Sawayanagi died and by the time Palmer finally left Japan in 1936?

As we have seen, a 'Reader System' ranging 'satellite' materials around a core reading text had begun to be offered to Japanese teachers by the time of Sawayanagi's death, but the appropriateness of this model in practice was yet to be determined. The increasingly important role of Japanese teachers in 'appropriating' Palmer's ideas will therefore constitute the focus of this section.

As Palmer himself was later to emphasize, while IRET's primary role had always been to engage in research and the formulation of general principles, it was largely 'for the schools and the teachers themselves to find the interpretation of these principles [. . .] likely to be the most suitable for their pupils' (Palmer 1933b: 1). Palmer's further recommendation, in line with his belief in the validity of 'multiple lines of approach', was that 'many different sorts of combinations of these principles should be tried out according to the various conditions of various types and grades of schools' (ibid.).

Indeed, as was indicated in the last chapter, the Department of Education turned a deaf ear to the proposals for reform which were made by IRET between 1925 and 1928, and it was therefore largely due to the efforts of individual schools and teachers (as well as the influence of loyal supporters such as Ishikawa Rinshiro, who became head of the English Department at Tokyo's leading teacher-training college in 1925), that IRET ideas did take root and develop within the Japanese middle-school context.

The best barometer of this appropriation by Japanese teachers of IRET methodology, as has been indicated by Ozasa (1995a, b), may be reports of demonstration lessons at IRET's Annual Convention in the *Bulletin* and elsewhere. Ozasa (1995a: 39–68) has shown how these lessons clearly progressed from being taught by foreign teachers in the early years to (almost always) being taught by Japanese middle-school teachers from 1926 onwards, and how in the years up to the Tenth Convention in 1933 a variety of means of relating traditional Japanese ways of teaching to 'reformed methods' were seen to have been attempted by the different demonstrators. The most apparently successful and influential among these adaptations was the so-called 'Fukushima Plan', this being a curriculum developed along IRET lines at Fukushima Middle School (Ozasa, 1995a: 50–67). Lessons based on this curriculum were demonstrated at the Tenth Convention in 1933, attended by more than 600 participants (Imura 1997: 172). From 8–9 June 1934 Palmer attended the Conference of English Teachers in Fukushima Prefecture, in the company of Ishikawa Rinshiro (Ozasa 1995a: 127), and in July the Fukushima middle school curriculum was published by IRET (Isoo and Shimizu 1934), with a supportive (1934q) foreword by Palmer.

While the Fukushima Plan clearly shows a development from general learning principles as expounded by Palmer to specific (sometimes original) classroom procedures involving much 'rapid-fire' oral work, it places, at the same time, a greater emphasis not only on reading and writing but also on explicit grammar instruction and translation than Palmer himself had tended to recommend. Ozasa (1995a: 66) explains this with reference to the need to prepare students for university entrance examinations and describes the 'Fukushima Method' as therefore constituting 'an excellent adaptation of the Palmer Method in the Japanese context'. Imura (1997: 169–75) recognizes the importance and subsequent influence of the Fukushima Plan, but complements his own description with analysis of a subsequent modification demonstrated at the Twelfth Convention in 1935 by teachers of Shonan Middle School, which was also highly evaluated by other Japanese teachers at the time. Imura (1997: 117) concurs with Ozasa in noting that if such modifications had not occurred IRET's influence would be unlikely still to be felt today in Japan (see 8.15 below). It was, then, more than anything else, the willingness actively to appropriate and adapt Palmer's ideas that was shown by

Japanese teachers after his first five years in Japan which ensured that Sawayanagi's original intentions for the development of 'appropriate methodology' in the Japanese middle school context were, to a large extent, achieved.

8.2 A 'lexicological turn'

Palmer was to recall that the years 1927–28 saw 'The realizing of the need for an objective survey of the English linguistic symbols', which was to involve henceforth 'research not only on the psychology of language-learning but also on many baffling problems of English lexicology' (Palmer 1933y: 4; see also his *Bulletin* editorial, 'Lexicology as a hobby' (1928s) for a somewhat tongue-in-cheek account of the revival of his interest in this area).

Although Palmer might thus appear to have retired to some extent from the front line of reform in order to concentrate on background research of a more linguistic, code-focused nature, it is clear that this work, at least in its initial (1928–31) phase, was undertaken with a practical eye to the provision of more appropriate contents (in the first instance, lexical contents) for learning, in the Japanese middle school context. Official sanction had been given to this new line of research at the 1927 Convention, where a request was made by certain members for attention to be turned to the what (as well as the how) of middle school English education, 'including [. . .] determining of the number and sort of words, phrases, standard sentences and grammar mechanisms'.¹ Palmer later interpreted this request as having implied, more specifically, 'the compilation, first, of a limited English word-list and, secondly, of a selection of [collocations]', adding that 'It was further suggested that the Department of Education might ultimately adopt or recommend the resultant lists as corresponding to the vocabulary required of an entrant to the schools of higher grade [i.e., universities]' (1933p: 1).

Thus, drawing on his experience of writing the 'Standard Readers' with the demands of 'plain English' (as emphasized at the 1925 Convention), and with the requirements of oral work based on reading texts subjectively in mind, Palmer may

1 Anonymous report in *Bulletin* 40 (Jan. 1928): 7.

have considered that IRET's next area of appropriate research in the Japanese context should be to tackle traditionalists on their own home ground, questioning prevalent conceptions of what should be allowed to 'stand for' written English and, indeed, grammar (see 8.3 below). While his own Readers had been written in a plain, colloquial style, offering clear appended examples in illustration of major grammatical rules, other textbooks available at the time (and, even more importantly, university entrance examinations) tended to include many old-fashioned, literary, or esoteric words and constructions. Palmer's 'lexicological turn' (itself following on from his earlier shift towards a greater focus on the twin aims of reading and writing in English) was therefore to bear fruit, at the end of its first phase, in the *Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection* of 1930, a number of further supplements in 1931, and the second major *Interim Report* in 1931, which were all immediately applied in the production of new materials for the middle school context. These documents should be viewed primarily as tools for building upon the achievements of the 'Reader System', having been intended to provide further guidelines for the writing, in the Japanese context, of reader materials and, importantly, entrance examinations in 'plain English'.² As will be described in section 8.3 below, the question of grammatical contents for learning was to be more quickly considered, in a cluster of 1928 publications, although issues of structural and collocational grading were not explicitly addressed at this still early stage.

8.3 Attempts to counter misunderstandings

The transitional year of 1928 saw several attempts to counter misunderstandings regarding the IRET approach as this had evolved, involving emphasis on the fact that traditional literacy-oriented goals were being adequately addressed (1928j, l, n).

In parallel with his preliminary work on vocabulary limitation (see 1928c, i, s), Palmer also turned his attention during this year to a prevalent misunderstanding

2 Thus, the first *Interim Report* (Palmer 1930k) was to contain the suggestion that a final report should classify the selected words into radii corresponding to the needs of the five years of the Japanese middle-school course, and this was in fact attempted (tentatively) in the *Second Interim Report* (1931r).

that the ‘reformed methods’ neglected grammar. In a cluster of publications (1928o–r) published in Japanese only (this linguistic choice is significant, for his intention was surely to reach the most resistant teachers in Japan), Palmer outlined his replacement approach to the traditional parsing of sentences, terming this alternative ‘mechanism grammar’ (or, later, ‘pattern-grammar’). In a development of his earlier London work on ‘ergonics’ and substitution tables, and referring to materials already published for the ‘Grammar and Structure Line of Approach’ of the Standard Course (1924d, 1925g), Palmer indicated how construction-patterns could be taught as a basis for (spoken and written) production, accompanying theoretical explanation and sample exercises with a patented ‘Automatic Sentence Builder’ (see Tickoo 1986: 55 for further details). This approach was later returned to in 1932t and 1934aa, joining up at that point with collocational considerations to lead ultimately to a classification of the most significant ‘sentence patterns’ for learners of English as a foreign language (this achievement being realized, in particular, in Palmer’s (1938h) *A Grammar of English Words*, and in works by Hornby, Gatenby and Wakefield (1942) and Hornby (1954) which were to be corner-stones of post-war ELT; see Chapter 10 below).

8.4 Adaptations of the ‘Reader System’

From around this time onwards, Japanese teachers associated with IRET appear to have increasingly appropriated the ideas and materials with which they had been provided (see 8.1 above). The Convention itself became rapidly ‘nationalized’ after 1928, with most of the proceedings being carried out in Japanese from that year onwards (Sarvis 1928: 2). Demonstration lessons by Japanese teachers, as opposed to debates on structural reform or observation of demonstrations by foreign teachers, were by now becoming the focal point of Convention activity (Ozasa 1995a: 46–50).

As we have seen, a ‘Reader System’ ranging ‘satellite’ materials around a core textbook containing reading passages had begun to be offered to Japanese teachers by the end of 1927, but the appropriateness of this model in practice was yet to be determined. Over the next few years, as feedback was received from

teachers, it became clear that slight modifications were necessary, but the system remained in place fundamentally unchanged until the outbreak of the Pacific War. At the same time, an increasing number (although never a large number) of schools and teachers appear to have adopted IRET materials and procedures, further adapting them to local needs (see 8.1 above).

Palmer's (1929d) editorial on the 'Development of our English course' indicates that, on the basis of feedback received from teachers, the 'Reader System' was considered by the spring of 1929 to be in need of refinement (but not radical overhaul) in particular through the provision of extra companion books. Specifically, it seemed that 'many teachers were doubtful as to how the Reader System should be used in the initial stages' (1929d: 1). Palmer therefore produced a detailed teaching plan for the 'First Six Weeks of English' (1929g) which indicates 'how best to bring the pupils to that point at which they learn to spell, read and write' (Palmer 1929d: 1). Later in the same year a set of short passages was produced for the 'First Six Weeks of Reading' (1929p). These build on previous oral work, introducing pupils gradually to the reading and writing of familiar words in unfamiliar Roman script.

A series of elementary texts (side readers) was also planned which would 'contain no word that is not already familiar to the pupils, thus the reading will be true reading and not "deciphering"'. On a similar basis of ongoing research into vocabulary control, side readers were additionally promised for supplementary rapid reading. These promises go some way towards explaining both why graded readers began to be produced in such quantities during and after 1931, on the basis of the Institute's 1930–31 vocabulary limitation research reports, and why questions of text simplification and the teaching of reading began to receive so much attention in Palmer's editorials in the *Bulletin* and supplementary memoranda in 1932.

8.5 Lectures and other engagements (1928–31)

Palmer continued to promote methodological reform actively via his lectures, despite turning his attention increasingly in his research to 'background' lexicological issues. In January 1928, for example, he spoke at Doshisha University in Kyoto on 'The reformed teaching of English' and 'Intonation', then gave further

lectures in the Kansai area. In February he spoke at the Tokyo Higher Normal School, and from 17 April to 21 June at meetings of a recently formed 'Association for the New Method of English Language Teaching' (Ozasa 1995a: 121). From 23 to 31 July there was also a series of talks on new methods of English teaching for middle schools (summarized in 1928l) at a seminar held, exceptionally, under the auspices of the Department of Education, at Tokyo School of Foreign Languages.

October saw the foundation of the Association of Foreign Teachers in Japan (Imura 1997: 259), in which both Palmer and his friend and collaborator H. Vere Redman were to play active roles. The Fifth IRET Convention was held from 11 to 13 October at the First Tokyo Prefectural Middle School.

On 24 April 1929 Palmer spoke at Kanda Domei Kaikan on the practical application of the new method of teaching English, and in the same month conducted a demonstration lesson with first year (beginner) pupils of the Middle School attached to Tokyo Higher Normal School, using the five lessons of 1929f as experimental teaching material (Ozasa 1995a: 122). On June 25 a new Research Section for the teaching of pronunciation was established within IRET, with a remit to focus on the production of gramophone records for this purpose (see 1929k). The Sixth IRET Convention was held from 24 to 26 October at Teikoku Kyoiku Kaikan (in Hitotsubashi) and at Tokyo Higher Normal School.

On a lighter note, the involvement of both Palmer and his daughter in amateur dramatic activities in Tokyo and Karuizawa was reflected in two 1929 publications. While Dorothée published an annotated phonetic edition, complete with tone-marks, of a comedy by H. H. Davies entitled *The Mollusc* (Dorothée Palmer 1929), Palmer co-wrote, directed and published a (1929s) revue in three acts, first performed in Karuizawa in 1928, then in Tokyo in 1929, which was designed to instruct as well as entertain with regard to the functions of the League of Nations, of which he was an ardent supporter.

From 12 to 13 March 1930 Palmer spoke in Kobe and Osaka on 'How to learn conversational English' (this continuing interest was also reflected in a 1930a editorial). In the autumn he visited thirteen cities in the central and north-western parts of Japan to speak on 'Modern classroom procedures and devices', and in October he gave talks in Osaka (Ozasa 1995a: 123).

From 31 May Palmer took up employment as a part-time lecturer at Tokyo School of Foreign Languages, perhaps in order to supplement his income, since funding from Matsukata Kojiro had dried up even before the collapse of the latter's business empire in 1927. Indeed, there is some doubt as to whether Palmer was ever paid directly by the Department of Education (as opposed to indirectly, for part-time teaching and teacher-training work at the Tokyo Higher Normal School), and it is clear that he never received royalties from IRET publications. The Institute itself was being operated on a shoe-string and Palmer frequently donated income from non-IRET publications and other sources to keep it afloat (Imura 1997: 134).

In November Palmer accepted an invitation to supervise the English teaching programme at an experimental middle school for girls, Jiyu Gakuen. He was also to teach there, in 1931 and 1932 (Imura 1997: 259), and he gave demonstration lessons with pupils from the school at the 1931 and 1932 IRET Conventions. Formerly, girls' school course-designing had been neglected (although a different middle school curriculum was in operation there from that in boys' schools). Starting with his 1930g and 1930j materials, however, Palmer now began to give this area more attention.

8.6 Ongoing lexicological research

One reason side-readers were not in fact produced until 1931 despite the need for them being indicated in 1929 (see 8.4 above) seems to have been Palmer's awareness that his lexicological research work was not yet far enough advanced for them to be confidently compiled. In his report to the Sixth IRET Convention (1929r), although specific proposals for middle school vocabulary limitation were not yet in sight, Palmer felt able to report that 'exceptionally great' progress had been made in the area of preliminary definition, expressing at the same time 'a suspicion that those engaged in counting the occurrences of words and idioms [in the field of statistical lexicology] have not taken adequate precautions to ascertain exactly what it is that they are counting' (p. 5). With this side-swipe at contemporary American statistical lexicologists including E.L. Thorndike, Palmer presented his own provisional classification scheme. In the process he revealed a

revised, more confident conception of the relationship between research work connected with language teaching and research in the other linguistic sciences, proposing that the former can inform the latter, as well as vice versa. Indeed, he ventured to suggest that IRET research already had something to say to those involved in such fields as phonetics, grammar, and statistical lexicology, as well as in the more practical area of language course designing. Palmer's 'science of language-teaching', it would appear, had by now taken on a relatively active 'producer' role in practice, rather than remaining in the 'consumer' role assigned to it by *The Scientific Study* (where Palmer had stated that 'To lay the foundations of the science of language-study it will not be necessary to make new discoveries; it will be quite sufficient to collect factors which are perfectly well known and to co-ordinate them into one comprehensive system' (1917b: 22)).

The whole of 1930 (until and beyond the October Convention) was also to be spent in careful consideration of issues which Palmer felt needed to be addressed before specific proposals could be made for vocabulary limitation (and text simplification). Thus, the following articles and editorials consistently raise questions of definition with regard to the nature of 'words' and 'idioms': 1929i, l, m, 1930b, e, i.

On 19 October 1930 Palmer gave a paper (published the following year as 1931d) on 'Some aspects of lexicology' at a meeting in Kyoto of the English Literary Society. The Seventh IRET Convention was held from 23 to 25 October at the Teikoku Kyoku Kaikan, Hitotsubashi, and it was at this Convention that Palmer published the first practical results of his careful lexicological research over the preceding two years, presenting the first version of his word-list for middle schools, in the *Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection* (1930k).

This report contains a subjectively drawn-up list of 3,000 'head-words', indicating at once Palmer's continuing suspicion of objective word counts and, more positively, the confidence he had gained over the preceding two years of careful preliminary research, which enabled him now to propose the following as a definition of an 'Effective Unit' for word-lists: 'a given word together with a selection of its commonest derivatives and compounds', that is, a 'Head-Word' together with its 'Sub-Words' (1930k: 6), with each head-word being deemed to include its inflected forms, if any, and all its semantic varieties, but with members

of homonyms being counted as separate units (1930k: 7–8). Further clarifications are presented on pp. 9–17, and these are followed by the suggested list itself, ‘as selected provisionally and tentatively’ by Palmer and two Japanese colleagues, ‘with a view to submitting them [. . .] for criticism’ (p. 32). In the same report, Palmer indicates research directions for the coming year: refinement of the submitted list by breaking it down into distinct numerically limited ‘radii’ (p. 5), and the drawing-up of a separate list of collocations (pp. 17–23).

Thus, a new line of research appears to have started in 1930–31 with a provisional attempt to collect and systematically classify collocations. The first report on this subject was presented at the 1931 Convention in the form of a mimeographed list (of which no copies appear to survive) based largely on Saito Hidesaburo’s *Jukugo hon’i ei-wa chujiten* (English-Japanese Idiomological Dictionary, 1927 revised edition). This preliminary list was to be substantially revised and expanded over the following two years, culminating in the issue of the *Second Interim Report on English Collocations* (1933p). As will be discussed further below (in 8.8), Palmer’s lexicological research in the first half of 1931 also led towards the publication at the October 1931 IRET Convention of the *Second Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection* (1931r), which presented, for the first time, five distinct radii for the five years of middle school.

8.7 Lexicology applied

The 1930–31 IRET reports on vocabulary selection, it is clear, were not only undertaken with a view to the perceived needs of the Japanese context, but also were immediately applied for the benefit of that context. Apart from making possible a new ‘English as Speech’ series (see below), they were consulted in the production of revised, abridged editions of the (core) ‘Standard English Readers’,³ and in the writing of the supplementary simplified readers which began to be issued in great quantities from 1931 onwards by the Institute, with A.S. Hornby becoming involved, still, at this time, in Kyushu, in the writing of a large number of these.

3 Anonymous note on ‘The Abridged Standard Readers’, *Bulletin* 88 (Oct.–Nov. 1932): 5.

Palmer's final *Bulletin* editorial of 1930 (1930s) had prepared IRET members for a forthcoming initiative in materials design, the 'English as Speech' series. In this editorial, Palmer emphasized (in response to persistent previous misunderstandings of his 'Saussurean' distinction between 'Code' and 'Speech') that:

The convenient term "English as Speech" does not mean "English as a Spoken Language," still less does it mean "Conversational English."

It means rather "English as possessed by one who forms his thoughts in English, who does not speak or write it by dint of mental translation from another language, or understand and read it by dint of mental translation into another language."

Palmer (1930s: 1)

Accordingly, the new 'English as Speech' series of materials was announced in January 1931 as follows: 'each volume will constitute a complete unit (or "outfit") suitable for use in the higher classes of Middle-Grade Schools or for the Higher-Grade Schools'.⁴ This series (beginning with Palmer's 1931b and 1931k contributions) constituted an innovative attempt to represent 'Reader System' principles in microcosm, with each volume being planned to consist of five distinct parts: (i) a simplified story, divided into sections; (ii) an 'explanatory introduction' (for use in oral introduction by the teacher); (iii) a set of 'Direct Method [writing] exercises' on the model of *Graded Exercises in English Composition* (1925o, etc.); (iv) questions and answers for oral work on the basis of the text; and (v) a 'new-type examination' also based on the text. Production of the materials in this series may have been conceived as a means of encouraging teachers not yet using the 'Standard English Readers' to try out IRET procedures on a small-scale, experimental basis, as well as to meet a perceived demand for materials from higher school teachers.

The stories in this series were simplified within the radius of 3,000 head-words which had been presented in the first *Interim Report* (1930k). Although this inventory had not yet been broken down into radii for the five years of middle-school, it had already enabled the writing of these supplementary, graded reading

4 *Bulletin* 70 (Jan. 1931): 10.

materials for relatively advanced learners (who might be expected to have already been exposed to the 3,000-word ‘microcosm’). Palmer’s (1931q) handbook for teachers, *The Technique of Question-Answering*, was to be the only volume in a projected ‘Aids to English as Speech’ series, but the ‘English as Speech’ series itself finally comprised seventeen volumes, most of these being compiled by A.S. Hornby in 1931–32, but with the last appearing as late as 1938.⁵ It is clear, then, that the series met with some success, probably more so in higher than in middle schools.

8.8 International challenges

As we shall see (in 8.9 below), in June 1931 Palmer left Japan for an eight-month-long ‘world tour’ which was to establish new, international priorities in his mind. Palmer already seems to have been aware that recent developments overseas needed to be considered for their relevance to Japan, indeed this awareness was the major motivation for the tour. Certainly, since the publication of the first *Interim Report on Vocabulary Control* (1930k), Palmer had been facing unaccustomed criticism from some *non*-Japanese teachers in Japan for not relating his enquiries into vocabulary limitation adequately to those being undertaken in the USA and the UK. This year (1931) saw, then, a partial acknowledgement of the potential contributions of statistical lexicology as was being advocated in the USA, as well as the start of continuing attempts to justify IRET work in relation to the more subjectively, indeed philosophically compiled word-list of Basic English.

5 Apart from Volumes 1 and 3 by Palmer (1931b and 1931k, respectively), the following were simplified for the series, all by A.S. Hornby unless otherwise indicated: ‘*The Bullet-Proof Jacket*’ and *Other Stories* (Vol. 2, 1931); *Comical Correspondence* (Vol. 4, 1931, by Edward Gauntlett); *Curious Origins of Common Words and Expressions* (Vol. 5, 1931); *Paragraphs from ‘Punch’* (Vol. 6, 1932); ‘*Shakespeare’s “Twelfth Night”: The Story of the Play*’ by Mary Lamb (Vol. 7, 1932); *Helen Keller* (Vol. 8, 1932, adapted by H.C. Sarvis); ‘*The Truth about Pyecraft*’ by H. G. Wells (Vol. 9, 1932); ‘*Two Chinese Sketches*’ by Somerset Maugham (Vol. 10, 1932, adapted by Eric S. Bell); ‘*The Necklace*’ by Guy de Maupassant (Vol. 11, 1933); ‘*The Face on the Wall*’ by E. V. Lucas (Vol. 12, 1933); ‘*Shakespeare’s “The Tempest”: The Story of the Play*’ by Mary Lamb (Vol. 13, 1934); ‘*Nickels and Dimes*’ and *Other Stories* (Vol. 14, 1936); ‘*The Elephant’s Revenge*’ and *Other Stories* (Vol. 15, 1936; author/adaptor unknown); ‘*The Cauldron of Oil*’ by Wilkie Collins (Vol. 16, 1936); and *Telling the Time* (Vol. 17, 1938). This list is based on that in Imura (1997: 183).

The first *Interim Report* had been criticized, in particular, for 'being insufficiently based on the findings of objective quantitative statistics' (1931r: 24), and, with the encouragement and assistance of Lawrence Faucett (see Appendix 6.4), Palmer engaged in his own statistical research to establish the most frequent 1,000 English words during the early part of 1931 (1931c, h, n). Later in the year, in Palmer's absence, the October 1931 Convention saw the publication of his (1931r) *Second Interim Report*, which broke down IRET's list of 3,000 words, for the first time, into five distinct radii for the five years of middle school, with some reference to word frequency but also to arguments and proposals closer to Palmer's heart in favour of additionally taking into account classroom requirements at the beginning level (1931p).

On the other hand, Palmer had found it necessary to write a *Bulletin* editorial earlier in the year (1931i) in response to an anonymous critic in *The Japan Chronicle* who had proposed that IRET should cooperate with the (Cambridge) Orthological Institute's Basic English proposals. Palmer contended, however (1931i: 1), that a prominent member of this Institute, I.A. Richards, had informed him a few months previously that Basic English 'did not attempt to cater for school children, but only for the needs of scientists' (Richards was later to deny strenuously that he had said any such thing). During Palmer's absence from Japan in the second half of 1931 (when, as we shall see, he met Ogden), a lively debate on Basic English was carried on in the pages of the *Bulletin*, and on his return Palmer was to find himself called upon increasingly to justify his own approach to vocabulary limitation in the face of criticisms from Basic English supporters and 'agents' in Japan including William Empson, Philip Rossiter and Okakura Yoshisaburo. Correspondence on the matter in Japan's English-language press was to resume in 1933, by which time Palmer's relations with the founders and supporters of Basic English had considerably worsened (see Palmer 1933s). Basic English may have seemed from around this time, then, to threaten not only the credibility of Palmer's own suggestions for vocabulary control but the whole IRET programme for reform, insofar as this had come to be centred on the production of written materials.

8.9 'World tour'

On 6 June 1931, Palmer left Japan for an eight-month 'world tour' which was to involve a number of (for him) fascinating first meetings with well-known figures in the worlds of linguistics and language teaching. As Bongers (1947: 79–82) records, first he visited teachers and researchers in Moscow, travelling there by Trans-Siberian express. After a short stay in the UK (during which he met C.K. Ogden and Michael West), he departed for Geneva to attend the Second Congress of the International Philological Society, meeting Otto Jespersen and Albert Sechehaye there briefly. Then he crossed the Atlantic to the USA, where he renewed his acquaintance with Edward Sapir and met Leonard Bloomfield and Algernon Coleman (see below), as well as a number of statistical lexicologists, although not E.L. Thorndike, whom he had especially hoped to meet.⁶

Bloomfield, Jespersen, Sapir and Sechehaye – the linguists whose work he most admired – had all been included by Palmer on the roster of IRET members since its foundation (Naganuma 1934: 210–13). It was, however, his meetings with figures more directly involved in contemporary debates on language teaching — Coleman, Ogden, West and statistical lexicologists including Ernest Horn and Helen Eddy in the USA — which were to influence Palmer's subsequent work most profoundly (in the sense that he was to find much to object to in their proposals).

During the last leg of his tour, Palmer became conscious (and somewhat envious) of the extent to which West's ideas on the need to approach reading *through* reading as opposed to oral work were being met with sympathy within the modern language teaching 'establishment' in the USA, as represented in particular by Algernon Coleman, the leading proponent of the Reading Method in the USA. At the same time, Palmer gained encouragement from the realization that his early (London) publications appeared to be well-known and well-respected in modern language teaching circles, and that there were pockets of resistance to the Reading Method among practising language teachers. On 7 January 1932, just before returning to Japan, Palmer gave a lecture in Los Angeles (1932b) in which he

6 Details reported here and below relating to the USA leg of Palmer's world tour come mainly from entries in an unpublished, handwritten 'News-letter' which he sent to friends and family (in PFVA).

expressed his own view, matured over the preceding decade in the course of reform efforts in Japan, that the ‘Oral and Direct’ methods represented the best initiation for beginning students, even in situations where reading ability was considered the ultimate goal.

Besides remaining sceptical of the over-emphasis on reading which he encountered in the USA, Palmer also confirmed his prior perception that the statistical approach to vocabulary limitation was insufficiently tied to careful classifications of a linguistic nature. With regard to Basic English, on the other hand, Palmer’s meeting with Ogden had left him willing, at this stage, to experiment with it on his return to Japan (Bongers 1947: 80); however, Ogden was to resist this suggestion, feeling that any such ‘experimentation’ would place the integrity of his word-list under threat. Increasingly (as we shall see in 8.9 below), Basic was to be perceived by both Palmer and West as a nuisance. In order to collaborate to resist its diffusion, they were even to ignore their differences in other areas (notably, with regard to the role and teaching of reading).

All in all, Palmer’s world tour (in particular, the meetings with Coleman, Ogden, West and the statistical lexicologists) can be seen to have contributed to a significant change in the nature of his statements in the *Bulletin* following his return to Japan in February 1932, with these becoming much more internationally oriented, and ‘universalist’ in tone and reference.

Just as important as the tour, perhaps, in establishing new international priorities in Palmer’s mind had been a rapid worsening in the domestic political situation during his eight months outside Japan. Following on from the outbreak of fighting in Manchuria in September 1931, and its subsequent occupation by the Japanese Army, Shanghai — where Elisabeth had been visiting Dorothée — was bombarded by Japanese naval forces (Storry 1990: 186–91). Fortunately, his family was safe, but Palmer had received a shock, and from this time onwards he may have been looking for ways to leave, or at least look beyond, Japan.

Palmer finally returned to Japan, eight months after his original departure date, on 26 February 1932 (Imura 1997: 260). During his absence, the Eighth IRET Convention had been held at Tokyo Higher Normal School (15–16 October 1931), and in December 1931 a proposal on English language teaching adopted by the Convention was presented to the Minister of Education (Ozasa 1995a: 124). On 30

April 1932 Palmer gave one of the first of his reports on his tour, at Tokyo Higher Normal School, speaking on 'Extensive reading for content'. In April he also announced the development of a new 'Simplified English Series' (Ozasa 1995a: 125) and in June gave the first of his daily 'Eigo [English language] News (Current Topics)' broadcasts on JOAK, the national radio broadcasting station (Imura 1997: 260). These broadcasts were to make his name, quite literally, a 'household word' in Japan.

From 10 to 13 October 1932, Palmer spoke on 'The fundamentals of English teaching' at a seminar for English teachers at Tokyo Shisei Kaikan sponsored by IRET, and from 14 to 15 October the Ninth IRET Convention was held, at Hibiya Kokaido, Tokyo. The following month saw the issue of a new series of 'Abridged Standard English Readers' for middle schools (1932v-z).

Palmer's commitment to the reform of English teaching in Japan had, until this stage, been so all-embracing that, after 1921, he had written no further statements on language teaching for publication in the UK.⁷ This situation changed in 1932 with the publication by Harrap of *This Language-Learning Business* (1932l), written jointly with H. Vere Redman. Redman, who had come to Japan in 1927 to teach at Tokyo University of Commerce (Imura 1997: 135), was twenty-four years younger than Palmer but they appear to have been good friends, partly perhaps as a consequence of a certain shared exuberance as well as common journalistic interests (see Cortazzi 1997). The genesis and writing process of their joint (1932l) 'production' is described entertainingly by Anderson (1969: 150-51).

8.10 Lexicology decontextualized

Following his world tour, as I have already implied, there seems to have been a partial, although never absolute, severing of connections between IRET's lexicological research programme, led by Palmer, and needs in the Japanese middle

7 Indeed, the only books of any description initiated during his time in Japan for publication in the UK had been *A Dictionary of English Pronunciation with American Variants* (1926t, co-authored with J.V. Martin and F.G. Blandford) and *English Pronunciation through Questions and Answers* (1928d, co-authored with F.G. Blandford).

school context. It is evident, for example, that from 1932 onwards Palmer became increasingly involved in debates of an international nature regarding text simplification (1932j), the acquisition of reading skills (1932m) and Basic English (1933s), culminating in his participation in the 'Carnegie Conference' of 1934 and 1935, in New York and London, respectively. At the same time, ongoing lexicological research within IRET may have begun to obey, as Cowie (1999) has discerned, an autonomous, internal momentum of its own, following a path of perceived 'universal' relevance which was to lead out of early (1928–30) attempts carefully to define the nature of lexicological enquiry itself to the consideration of collocation and other aspects of phraseology (1931–33), and thence to questions of syntax (1934), without these moves necessarily following the dictates of specific needs within the local context (see 8.11 below). These moves away from specifically Japanese priorities may have also been linked indirectly to the sudden worsening in political circumstances in Japan in 1931–32 (mentioned above) which marked a definitive end to a period of relative liberalism and an entry into what has been termed the 'dark valley' of domestic ultra-nationalism leading up to the Pacific War (Storry 1990: 182).

These factors may all help to explain why, following his return to Japan, editorials and articles by Palmer in the IRET *Bulletin* increasingly adopt internationally oriented, 'universalist' positions (in relation, in particular, to Basic English and the effective teaching of reading); why, apart from the production of Readers for girls' schools (1933t–w) and direct method composition exercises (1933b, 1934i, w–x) for a range of school levels, all with the collaboration of E.K. Venables and A.S. Hornby, no new initiatives appear to have been taken with regard to middle-school course design; and, finally, why such energies appear to have been devoted to international propaganda on behalf of the Institute as it approached its tenth anniversary (e.g. Naganuma 1934; Palmer 1934r). From 1932 to 1934, also, the *Bulletin*, as in its earliest days, became the focus for intense debate among *non*-Japanese teachers, this time on the merits and demerits of Basic English. The debate ranged A.S. Hornby (who thus gained a certain presence on the IRET stage) against William Empson and other supporters of Basic English, and while doubtless of intense interest at the time to those concerned, is unlikely to have seemed of great relevance to Japanese middle-school teachers, who by now,

anyway, had their own pages (in Japanese) in the IRET *Bulletin* and their own forum in the shape of the Annual Convention.

However, Palmer's efforts were never to be entirely disengaged from a desire to support reform in Japanese middle school English education. Thus, in 1932 he turned his attention to a need which had previously been identified (in 1929d) for supplementary extensive reading materials, stating that, on the basis of the radii identified in the *Second Interim Report*, 'now, for the first time, it became possible to carry into execution the work that had been for so long deferred. It had bec[o]me possible to produce a text simplified within the limits of a definite radius' (1932s: 2).

Two new series of side readers were initiated in this year: the 'Simplified English' Series (1932f, r) for relatively advanced learners in middle schools and higher schools, and the 'Simplified English for Side Reading' Series (1932u) for more elementary levels. The first of these initiatives was explained in an article in April (1932i), while the latter was prefigured in an anonymous report in May stating that attempts were being made to design a 600-word 'elementary reading vocabulary' specifically for the rewriting of easy stories.⁸

As is made clear in a 1932n editorial on the 'testing of the word lists', story simplification was being carried out at this point not simply in order to provide useful materials on the basis of pre-determined word lists but also as a form of research work in itself, in other words as a means of practical experimentation for ascertaining in what ways existing (1930–31) lists might need to be refined. It is significant also that the new 600-word 'elementary reading vocabulary' announced in the May report is explicitly compared in that report with West's 'New Method' and Ogden's Basic English schemes. It is clear, then, that, while in 1932 the previously drawn-up 1930–31 word lists *were* being applied to the production of materials intended to be useful in themselves in the Japanese middle school context (including, importantly, abridged versions of the 'Standard English Readers' (1932v–z) and remaining volumes of the 'Standard English Readers for Girls' (1933t–w), these word-lists were themselves expected to be modified in the light of ongoing practical experimentation; it is clear also that text simplification was being

8 *Bulletin* 84 (May 1932): 8.

carried out at the same time in a spirit of rivalry with other internationally available word-lists.⁹ Both a research and an international orientation are indicated also by Palmer's willingness, at this stage, to engage in friendly competition with work commissioned from the principal supporters in Japan of Basic English.¹⁰

Following Palmer's eight-month period of absence abroad in 1931–32, there had been an increased involvement of non-Japanese as well as Japanese members in IRET research activities. A.S. Hornby and Edward Gauntlett had already contributed volumes to the 'English as Speech' series in 1931, and Hornby, in particular, was to contribute a number of further volumes in 1932. At the end of 1932 and in 1933 Hornby contributed several spirited defences of Palmer's approach in opposition to Basic English (see Appendix 8.1). In 1933, also, as Palmer later noted, Hornby had come to him with a 'definite proposal' for a 1,000-word vocabulary (later published as 1934c) for the simplification of relatively difficult texts (Palmer 1936g: 21). In 1933–34, both Hornby and E.K. Venables were to be involved in the production with Palmer of the remaining volumes in the 'Standard English Readers for Girls' series (1933t–w) and accompanying 'Direct Method composition exercises' (1933b, 1934i).

On 30 July 1933 IRET moved with the Department of Education to new premises (Imura 1997: 260) and from 16 to 18 October the 10th IRET Convention was held at Tokyo University of Commerce, Hitotsubashi, with demonstration lessons being given by a teacher of Fukushima Middle School. Immediately after the Convention, on 19 October, Palmer spoke at a different conference on 'The foreign teacher and the teaching of spoken English', emphasizing the value of using gramophone records in English teaching (Ozasa 1995a: 126). It was in this year, it

9 Palmer's own contributions to the 'Simplified English' Series (1932f, r) were complemented in ensuing years by '*Gulliver's Voyage to Lilliput*' (Being Part I of '*Gulliver's Travels*') by Jonathan Swift (Vol. 3, 1933, simplified by A. S. Hornby), '*The King of the Golden River*', or, '*The Black Brothers*' by John Ruskin (Vol. 4, 1935, A. S. Hornby), '*Treasure Island*' by Robert Louis Stevenson (Vol. 5, 1935, D. Dunsford Palmer) and '*Kidnapped*' by Robert Louis Stevenson (Vol. 6, 1936, A. S. Hornby). While only Palmer appears to have issued readers in the 'Simplified English for Side Reading' series (1932u, 1933a, m), both A.S. Hornby and E.K. Venables were involved in rewriting work for the 'Standard English Readers for Girls' series (1933t–w), and possibly, although no contribution is acknowledged, for the 'Abridged Standard English Readers' (1932v–z).

10 For example, an invited 'rival' version in Basic English by William Empson appeared alongside extracts from Palmer's (1932u) simplified version of *Pandora and the Box* in *Bulletin* 88 (Oct.–Nov. 1932): 6–8

seems, that Tristram, the Palmers' son, returned to England to enter a boarding school (Imura 1997: 260).

January 1934 saw the (delayed) publication of IRET's Decennary *Commemorative Volume* (Naganuma 1934), which included contributions from, among others, Bloomfield, Jespersen, Sapir, Sechehaye and West, and the preparation of a prospectus for the Institute (Palmer 1934r) which both summarized and celebrated the work of the previous ten years.

8.11 Collocations, sentence patterns and lexicography

The crowning achievement of 1933 was the long-promised report on English collocations (1933p), which Hornby seems to have contributed much to completing. As Rundell (1998: 318) notes, this work 'fed directly into the design and content of Hornby's dictionary [i.e., Hornby, Gatenby and Wakefield 1942], and a concern for describing and explaining phraseology has been one of the key features of the [monolingual learner's dictionary] ever since'. As Rundell (ibid.) additionally remarks, citing this report in particular, current applied linguistic interest in 'chunking', that is, the tendency of speakers and writers to 'store, retrieve and process language in pre-assembled multiword units', has roots which can be traced back 'not only to the Firthian academic tradition but also to the work done by Palmer and Hornby on collocations and other multiword expressions'.¹¹

The extent of separation of IRET research work from specifically Japanese priorities by this stage is indicated in the introduction to *Specimens of English Construction Patterns* (1934aa), which recognizes that the 'General Synoptic Chart' contained within this report 'will give the impression of something complicated and difficult' (p. 3). Building on the Appendix to the previous year's report on collocations (1933p: 187–88) and on 1932t, both of which had begun to show how construction-patterns might be classified for pedagogical purposes, 1934aa presents

11 See also Cowie 1999, Chapter 2, for an extensive and detailed analysis of the Palmer–Hornby legacy in the phraseological domain. Palmer was to draw up a detailed (1942) plan for further phraseological research which appeared in Bongers 1947 (this is listed as Palmer 1947c in my bibliography).

an innovative ‘master-key to construction patterns’. While it is hoped that this will ‘at least serve to indicate what will be the nature of [a] more complete scheme’ (p. 5), there is a clear recognition also that much work still needs to be done before patterns can be classified systematically for pedagogical purposes.

A similar impression that a mountain of work lies ahead before practical applications can be attempted (as conveyed in 1934aa) is conveyed in Palmer’s 1934bb *An Essay on Lexicology*, which, like 1934aa, presents innovative suggestions, in this case for the possible design of a ‘Learner’s dictionary’ on the basis of ongoing lexicological research, but which at the same time indicates that ‘the material presented [. . .] is not, as it stands, a series of extracts from any dictionary in preparation or contemplation’ (p. 1). It was to the credit, then, of A.S. Hornby and his co-workers that the pedagogical applications predicted somewhat tantalizingly in these two 1934 publications were, finally, realized under IRET auspices in the form of the *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary* (Hornby, Gatenby and Wakefield 1942) (see 8.14 below).

8.12 The ‘Carnegie Conference’

On 28 September 1934, Palmer left Japan for the USA to attend a conference sponsored primarily by the Carnegie Foundation on ‘The Use of English as a World Language’ and, in particular, problems of vocabulary limitation and text simplification, which was to be held from 15 to 20 October in New York.¹² Michael West appears to have taken the initiative in calling this conference, provoked partly by the perceived challenge of Ogden’s Basic English, and one consequence was the bringing-together of West and Palmer into a closer partnership (Howatt 1984: 336). The interest and expertise of both men with regard to text simplification and thence the ‘contents’ of instruction had originally developed within particular, non-European school contexts; indeed, despite their differences with regard to approaches to reading, it was perhaps ultimately their common appreciation of the demands of second language pedagogy ‘in difficult circumstances’ which united the

12 Anonymous report titled ‘Towards “Simplified English”’ in *Bulletin* 107, pp. 18–20. For a detailed account of the conference, see Appendix 7.

two men in their rivalry both with Ogden and the ‘word counters’. West had already been engaged to work in Canada (and was soon to be employed in London as a consultant and materials writer for Longmans, Green) on the back of his earlier research work in India. For Palmer himself, the Carnegie meetings were to become not only a showcase more fitting, perhaps, than that of the Annual IRET Conventions for his increasingly ‘autonomous’ research into collocations (Palmer 1933p) and construction patterns (Palmer 1934aa) but also a platform for his finally leaving Japan: rather, that is, than a springboard for renewed activity specifically for that context.

These were to be consequences in the future, however. With him to the first Carnegie Conference Palmer took not only the 1933p report on collocations but also a prospectus for the Institute (1934r), hoping, it seems, to gain funding from an American foundation (this hope was not, apparently, realized). In his review of the Carnegie Conference (1934ee), Palmer indicates that, along with West and Faucett, he had been delegated to present a report the following year, and that his own assignment was to be a ‘more detailed study of collocations’.

Whereas his previous work in Japan under Institute auspices had not only developed out of but had consistently been funnelled back to serve perceived needs in the Japanese middle-school context, Palmer’s two-month absence to attend the Carnegie Conference in New York in 1934 and his seven-month absence for the reconvened 1935 conference in London cannot be seen to have directly benefited Japanese teachers via new publications. The immediate product of the 1934 and 1935 Carnegie Conferences was to be the *Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection*, the so-called ‘Carnegie Report’ (Faucett, Palmer, Thorndike and West 1936). (See Appendix 7 for more on the collaborative research which led to its compilation.)

Howatt (1984: 255–57) emphasizes the lasting significance both of the ‘Carnegie Report’ (1936m) and of the *General Service List of English Words* (West 1953), in which the word-list was republished in a revised version. Unfortunately, in the latter (1953) version the first four parts of the original report were omitted (‘Introductory statement’ (Part I); ‘List of some subjects of research suggested in the proceedings of the conference’ (Part II); ‘Summary of the proceedings of the committee on vocabulary selection’ (Part III); and ‘Classification of the words included and excluded’ (Part IV)). Only a revised version of Part V, ‘The General

Service List' itself is included. As a consequence, the essentially collaborative nature of the Carnegie project, the research agenda it had inspired, and the principles underlying the final selection of words became somewhat obscured in West's later, independent (1953) version.

8.13 Departing moves

On 3 May 1935 Palmer left Kobe with Elisabeth to attend the World Conference of Educators in London and (from 11 June) the reconvened Carnegie Conference, held at the University of London Institute of Education (Imura 1997: 260). On 26 July he gave a paper on 'the place of phonetics in Japan' at the Second International Congress of Phonetic Sciences, held at UCL, which was published later in the conference proceedings (Palmer 1936). He also contributed to the programme of entertainments with a 'humorous song entitled "The Modern Phonetician"', reported but not included in the proceedings.¹³

During this visit to the UK, Palmer was offered employment by Longmans, Green (probably due to West's mediation), which he accepted. In absentia (on 19 August) he was awarded a D.Litt. by Tokyo Imperial University, specifically for his (1924b) *A Grammar of Spoken English*, but with his 1922a and 1930n works also being evaluated by the awarding committee.

In August, Dorothée and her family left China for the UK, where the Palmers' son, Tristram, had already been attending boarding school for two years (Imura 1997: 193, 261). Palmer finally returned to Japan on 29 December (Imura 1997: 261).

At a 10 March 1936 meeting of the IRET Board of Administration Palmer officially resigned as Director of IRET (Imura 1997: 261), and on 21 March he

13 In Jones and Fry (1936: 318), the following is reported: 'Thursday, 25 July [. . .] In the evening the Congress Dinner was held. [. . .] The speeches were followed by an informal entertainment given by members of the Congress. The programme included [. . .] a humorous song entitled "The Modern Phonetician", written and sung by Dr Palmer'. A. P. R. Howatt owns a typescript of this unpublished 'work', whose full title is 'The modern phonetician: A fluency exercise — 30 lines in 15 seconds'.

broadcast a farewell radio message to Japanese students of English, the transcript of which was published later (see 1936j below).

Palmer left Tokyo on 25 March, to give lectures in Nagoya and in Wakayama Prefecture (Ozasa 1995a: 129). He also visited Kyoto and Osaka before departing for China on 1 April (Imura 1997: 261). Returning briefly to Kobe on 15 April (Imura 1997: 261), he and his wife then departed finally for England, reaching home via Malaya and Ceylon (Ozasa 1995a: 129).

8.14 A.S. Hornby's continuation of IRET research

We shall now retrace our steps to survey the arrangements Palmer had put in place for the continuation of IRET research work following his departure from Japan, including consideration of when and under what circumstances A.S. Hornby first began to make his mark in IRET affairs.

Until work began in earnest on the collection and analysis of collocations for the *Interim Report* of 1933, it seems that 'background' IRET research work had largely been carried out by Palmer alone. On 28 July 1933, perhaps partly with an eye to his eventual departure, partly too in recognition of the immense amount of work which still needed to be done, he had, however, instituted a Board of Research Associates, composed entirely of Japanese university and middle-school teachers.¹⁴ Hornby himself seems to have become very much involved in research on collocations in the same year, from his base in Kyushu (Hornby had arrived there in 1924, for his first teaching post, in a small 'higher school' (i.e. university) (see Appendix 8.1). As Palmer later noted, Hornby, who had begun to write materials for IRET as early as 1928, and whom Palmer seems to have commissioned to write simplified readers for relatively advanced learners around 1930 (Palmer 1931f: 1), had come to him in 1933 with a 'definite proposal' for a 1,000 word vocabulary for the simplification of relatively difficult texts (Palmer 1936g: 21).

In January 1934, Hornby and Palmer issued their joint one-thousand word vocabulary list (1934c) — itself a development out of Palmer's earlier 600-word

14 Anonymous report titled 'I.R.E.T. Board of Research Associates inaugural meeting', in *Bulletin* 96 (July 1933): 9–10.

‘reading vocabulary’ (1932p) — which was to form the basis for numerous story adaptations both in Japan and in Britain over the ensuing years. Hornby had also been heavily involved in the research work leading up to the IRET report on collocations (1933p). Later, Hornby (with his first wife) was to engage even more intensively in the collection and analysis of collocations for Palmer’s report in 1935 to the reconvened Carnegie Conference in London.

Involving Hornby in the ongoing research work on collocations (which Hornby was later to take over), Palmer appears to have identified him as someone with whom he would like to collaborate more closely in Tokyo and, perhaps, as a potential successor for the leadership of continuing research efforts there. With effect from the beginning of April 1934, Palmer arranged for Hornby to come to Tokyo to teach at two universities with faculty supportive of the IRET research and reform programme, as well as to take over the management of IRET research during his own (projected) absences abroad. Hornby was thus able to work intensively with Palmer in 1934 on the IRET report on construction-patterns (1934aa). As I shall discuss further below, the particular stage (after 1931–32) when Hornby first came to collaborate closely with Palmer — a time of internationalization, decontextualization and concentration (on investigation of collocations and construction patterns) of the lexicological strand of research within the broader IRET programme — may be seen to have been crucial in determining the nature of Hornby’s subsequent contributions in the Japanese context, and, indeed, beyond.

At a meeting of the IRET Board of Directors on 10 April 1936, Palmer was appointed Honorary Adviser to IRET. Following his resignation as Director he had been replaced by Ishikawa Rinshiro, who had been a loyal and influential ally throughout his years in Japan. Hornby was appointed technical adviser to IRET and chief editor of the *Bulletin* (the post of ‘Linguistic Adviser to the Department of Education’ appears not to have been filled, although IRET retained its office inside the Department right up until the outbreak of the Pacific War).

In Hornby’s first (1936a) editorial for the *Bulletin*, he both summarized Palmer’s previous achievements and indicated his own objectives for forthcoming research. His summary is instructive for the conception it reveals of Palmer’s legacy in the Japanese context. Thus, Hornby concentrates entirely on Palmer’s work as a

‘linguistic expert’ or ‘technician’ (p. 4), focusing attention on his ‘analytical’ research in the fields of Speech Psychology, New-Type Grammar, Lexicological Research, Syntax and Synthesis (Hornby refers here to Palmer’s (1934bb) suggestions regarding how to produce ‘a dictionary that is more than a dictionary’). Hornby also mentions achievements in phonetics and intonation, but leaves out a number of aspects which Palmer himself, in 1934, had seen fit to include in his own summary of the previous ten years of work. Thus, Palmer’s own (1934r) list of IRET ‘Research’ achievements (which itself accompanies description of other contributions, in the areas of ‘Propaganda’, ‘Publications’, and ‘Teacher Training’) had mentioned the following: Research on Speech Psychology, Phonetic Research, Research on Grammar, Research on Vocabulary Limitation and Texts [*sic*] Simplification, Research on Composition Exercises, Research on Classroom Procedures, Research in Reader-Compiling, Research on Examining Procedures, Research on Higher School Problems, Research in Educational Gramophone Records. The inclusion of the last six or seven of these areas clearly reveals the extent to which Palmer had placed a primary emphasis on IRET work being geared towards the solving of practical problems in the Japanese context, with research being seen as an adjunct to that priority, even though his own research had tended over the previous two years (see 8.11 above) to follow ‘autonomous’ directions of its own (Cowie 1999).

For Hornby (1936a), on the other hand, the emphasis appears to have shifted to a conception of research as an end in itself, with a clear duty on the part of the researcher, however, to make the results available to the practitioner. Hornby was, in particular, aware of his *own* duty to diffuse the results of recent collocational and syntactic research, and, on the basis of his summary of Palmer’s achievements, he defines his own task as ‘the application of the work that has been done’. The three areas that he prioritizes are: (i) decisions as to which collocations to include in a well-graded middle-school course; (ii) an investigation of which construction patterns are of greatest utility and importance to beginners, co-ordination of this with work on new-type grammar, and presentation of the results for classroom use; and (iii) preparation of further handbooks for the use and guidance of teachers anxious to teach English ‘as Speech’ (Hornby 1936a: 5). As we shall see below, the first two of these aims rapidly became subsumed within work towards ‘new-type

dictionaries' (described only as a 'possible' development in Hornby's 1936a editorial), as opposed to reaching full fruition in syllabuses or classroom materials for the Japanese context, while the third objective was partially achieved, by means of numerous short articles in the *Bulletin*. It was only to be with his post-war work in the UK (see Chapter 10) that Hornby ultimately succeeded in fully achieving the applications to classroom work which he had envisaged in this programme.

Since he had entered fully into the IRET research programme at a time when Palmer's research was starting to become uncharacteristically divorced from priorities in the Japanese context, Hornby's attitude regarding the need to 'apply' research results (as opposed to basing research on specific practical problems) is wholly understandable. Just as Palmer himself (with his parting 'new-type dictionary' suggestions) seems to have recognized that the recent achievements in collocational and syntactic research would eventually have to be reconnected with the Japanese context in order to become fully justified, so Hornby took his responsibilities to Japanese teachers and students seriously. At the time Hornby became heavily involved, Palmer's lexicological research had already taken on a life of its own, with resulting needs for 'application', rather than itself having been constituted (as with the pre-1932 research efforts) as an ongoing attempt to solve predominantly pedagogical problems.

Thus, Hornby's own research over the ensuing five and a half years was to be characterized, as he had envisaged in 1936, by an attempt to synthesize and apply in the Japanese context (and refine by means of this attempt) research into lexis and syntax which had been left in only a semi-finished state on Palmer's departure. Efforts to connect this work with the middle-schools, however, were to be severely hampered by a further upsurge in domestic ultra-nationalism and militarism (involving, among other things, a growth in ideological indoctrination and further pressures on English teaching in the education system) following the outbreak of full-scale war with China in the summer of 1937. At the same time, as Ishikawa apologetically noted at the Convention of 1937, neither he nor Hornby could spare the time for research work which Palmer, with his freedom from full-time teaching duties, had always enjoyed.¹⁵ He also noted that work had begun on

15 'Address by Professor Rinshiro Ishikawa', pp. 18–21 within an anonymous report on 'The Fourteenth Annual Convention', *Bulletin* 139 (Dec. 1937): 15–29.

an English–English dictionary, and in both his and Hornby's reports to the Convention of the following year,¹⁶ it is made clear that a decision had been taken to focus on dictionary-writing, rather, that is, than on the more classroom-oriented applications which Hornby had envisaged in his first (1936a) *Bulletin* editorial. Over the next three years Hornby, with the help he had requested from other IRET colleagues, and under the guidance of Ishikawa and Naganuma (of Kaitakusha), succeeded in making two of the dictionaries a reality (see Cowie 1999), and so in relating the 'autonomous' lexicological and syntactic work of the years after 1932 back again, finally, to the Japanese context.¹⁷ By now, however, the dictionaries could only be a conclusion, rather than a new departure for more classroom-oriented work in this context.

With the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Pacific War began, on 7 December 1941. Both Hornby and Vere Redman were interned (the former in a German Catholic monastery in Tokyo according to Imura 1997: 236). On 20 April 1942 Kaitakusha succeeded, against all the odds, in publishing the *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary* (Japanese title: *Shin ei-ei dai-jiten* (New English–English Dictionary)), which had been compiled by Hornby with two IRET colleagues, E.V. Gatenby and H. Wakefield. This was later (in 1948) to be photographically reprinted by Oxford University Press and reissued as *A Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (see Cowie 1998, 1999). In the Preface to this important work, Hornby acknowledges Palmer's contributions as follows:

For many of the special features of this dictionary a great debt is owed to Dr. H. E. Palmer, first Director of the Institute for Research in English Teaching. The verb patterns would have been impossible without his work on sentence construction. As is noted elsewhere, the notes on the special features of the adverbial particles and anomalous finites are also based on his work. Without the foundation laid during the years 1923–36 by Dr. Palmer this volume could not have been prepared in its present form.

16 Both contained within an anonymous report titled 'The Fifteenth Annual Convention', *Bulletin* 148 (Nov. 1938): 11–37.

17 The first of these dictionaries, the *Beginner's English-Japanese Dictionary* (Japanese title: *Kihon Eigo Gakushuu Jiten* (Fundamental English Learner's Dictionary) was compiled jointly with Ishikawa and published on 30 March 1940.

Hornby was permitted to leave Japan in August 1942 under an exchange of nationals agreement, without, it appears, even having seen a copy of the dictionary (he did not, it seems, see a bound copy until after the war). He had, however, sent a set of proofs — under an arrangement with Kaitakusha — to OUP in London (Hornby 1974: 10). Hornby arrived back in Britain in October 1942 (Imura 1997: 238).

Despite the many problems they did indeed face, it was because of, rather than, as suggested by Redman (1966, 1967a), in spite of the establishment of IRET that Palmer and, latterly, Hornby were enabled to develop and diffuse their significant contributions to English teaching in Japan (and, both simultaneously and subsequently, the world), contributions which were themselves largely informed, as I have been at pains to emphasize in this chapter and the last, by an ongoing, all-embracing ‘mission’ – at the invitation and with the collaboration of Japanese educationists – to develop appropriate suggestions for reform within the Japanese school system. In my account of IRET’s history I have distinguished an initial period of research and development lasting from 1924 until 1931–32 (which took in the first part of the lexicological research programme) from a later (1932–41) period which saw a move away from specifically Japanese concerns into the more ‘autonomous’ collocational and syntactic research which has been analysed in detail by Cowie (1999). I have suggested that whereas research in the first period, inspired as it was by specific pedagogical problems, was continuously related back to the Japanese context on an ongoing, experimental basis, research in the second period – with its roots in such problems but with an international relevance, an internal momentum, and a complexity of its own — could only be related back after some time, in a rather more top-down, ‘applied’ manner. I have also attempted to show how political, social and educational developments in Japan played their part in this apparent shift in conceptions of what it meant to ‘do research’ in this context.

In the present section I have emphasized the significance of Hornby’s own achievement in refining and synthesizing, still for practical purposes in the Japanese context, the (1933–35) research into collocations and construction-patterns which had been carried out in collaboration with Palmer. Political, social and educational developments may have played their part, here too, in defeating Hornby’s original intention of applying these research results to syllabus and course design for

Japanese middle-schools; however, the research *was*, finally, both synthesized and applied, in two dictionaries for Japanese learners, one of which was reissued by OUP and found to be useful throughout the world. As we shall see in Chapter 10, Hornby's original, more classroom-oriented applied intentions were also to be fulfilled in post-war British publications which were diffused world-wide. Thus, the influence of Palmer and of IRET was extended far beyond the Japanese context in the post-war years, although it had been, primarily, both *for* and under the influence of this context that Palmer and Hornby had made their important pre-war contributions.

8.15 Palmer's legacy to English teaching in Japan

Responding to strong opposition to any teaching of the enemy's language, in February 1942 the IRET Board of Administration changed the name of the *Bulletin* to *Gogaku kyoiku* (Language Education), and in March IRET itself metamorphosed, under force of circumstance, into *Gogaku kyoiku kenkyujo* (literally, the 'Institute for Research in Language Education') (Imura, 1997: 232). The Institute survived the war and retains the same Japanese name, often shortened to '*Goken*', to this day (Imura 1997: 262; see also IRLT 1993, 1994).¹⁸

During the US Occupation (1945–52) there was a strong revival of interest in the learning of English, and American ideas, generally, exercised a strong appeal. However, the Occupation authorities did not themselves make methodological suggestions (Bryant 1956: 26–28), leaving the field to Japanese educators. As a consequence, despite the overall strength of American influence in the immediate post-war years, Japanese supporters of Palmer's ideas had a major role in writing the first post-war Mombusho (Ministry of Education) courses of study for

18 The Institute regained an English acronym after the war: 'IRLT', which stands for 'Institute for Research in Language Teaching'. Its main focus reverted to English in the post-war years, but IRLT has also retained, to a limited extent, its wartime connections with the teaching of Japanese as a second or foreign language. This field has itself been very much influenced by the pre-war work of Palmer, via his colleague and publisher Naganuma Naoe, and the latter's post-war Tokyo School of the Japanese Language (see Hirataka 1992: 94).

secondary schools, proposed in 1947 and 1951 (see Bryant 1956: 28–29; Omura, Takanashi and Deki 1980)

However, a major American-inspired attempt to establish oral teaching methods in Japan was undertaken from 1956 onwards, with the considerable financial backing of the Rockefeller Foundation, and the latest ideas on language teaching from the USA began to appear more attractive. Following a visit to Japan in 1956, A.S. Hornby wrote to Palmer's daughter: 'American influences are strong now (Fries, of the University of Michigan, is the new star)', but he found also that 'Palmer's work is remembered and appreciated'.¹⁹ Indeed, the Institute itself witnessed something of a revival as American efforts to reform English teaching themselves foundered towards the end of the 1960s (on these efforts, see Henrichsen 1989).

Overall assessments of Palmer's work in reforming Japanese English education have tended to be somewhat negative (e.g. Redman 1966, 1967a, b; Yamamoto 1978). To some extent these assessments have been based on false premises regarding his mission; he had not, after all, been invited to reform teaching in Japan single-handedly but encouraged (by Sawayanagi) to engage in research and 'ultimately' suggest methods which teachers might find appropriate. Nevertheless, Palmer himself seems to have had high initial hopes of leading a full-scale 'Reform Movement'. Despite his optimistic assessment in his speech to the Japan Society, London, in 1938 (Palmer 1938d), political events, and the increasing perception that English was the 'enemy's language', ultimately conspired to undermine the possible immediate benefits of patient IRET research work in the Japanese context. Clearly, also, *yakudoku* has continued to be the dominant approach to foreign language teaching in Japanese schools in the post-war era, in spite of all attempts to reform it.

From a positive viewpoint, it should be noted that ideas and materials developed within IRET were found to be useful by Japanese middle-school teachers who came into contact with them, and, as I have emphasized (in 8.1 above), it was IRET-influenced (as, nowadays, IRLT-influenced) teachers who were largely responsible for ensuring, through continuing experimentation of their own, that Palmer's ideas on methodology did begin to take root in secondary school practice.

19 Hornby to Dorothée Anderson, 13 October 1956, in PFVA.

The continuing presence of IRLT in the Japanese context as an influential forum, primarily for teacher-research and development, is evidence that Sawayanagi's initial hopes have been, at least partially, achieved. In this connection, it is apparent also that Redman's (e.g. 1967a: 14) assessment, based, as we have seen, on a flawed conception of the origin and role of the Institute, that because IRET work never really involved the government it ultimately had little effect, fails to take account of the way in which IRET created a role for itself not only in developing but also in diffusing and ensuring the continued use and further development of 'reformed methods', a role which the Japanese government has never tended to assume for itself. As Palmer said ten years after the foundation of the Institute:

Looking round we see our Institute not as a dominant influence in English teaching but simply as an important one; and we venture to think and hope that influences such as this one have a quality of permanence which is denied to those seeking or even acquiring dominance at any given time.

(Palmer 1933a: 2)

Most importantly, perhaps, Palmer 'succeeded' in firmly implanting the idea among progressive Japanese teachers and teacher trainers that language teaching should be based on sound, scientific principles, not simply the dictates of tradition. Palmer was not the first to introduce western methods into Japan (he built in this respect on previous work by Kanda and Okakura), but as a consequence of his own personal commitment and overall success in arguing for rational procedures, a new tradition of conceptualizing language teaching in terms of 'methodology' was established which has continued – for good or ill (see Chapter 11) – to guide progressive Japanese teachers of English, whatever their specific methodological persuasion.

IRLT itself continues to be one of the most important associations for secondary school English teachers and university teacher trainers in Japan. It has around 1,000 members all over Japan and is active in promoting research work, editing publications and organising teacher training seminars and an annual Convention, very much under the influence, still, of Palmer's ideas (see IRLT 1985, 1993, 1994, 1995 and below). Leading members of the Institute have edited *The*

Selected Writings of Harold E. Palmer (IRLT 1995) and in August 1999 IRLT organised a special programme of events to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of his death (Palmer's great-granddaughter, Victoria Angela, was the special guest of honour). IRLT has been wholly independent of the Ministry of Education since the end of the war, and is now one among many organizations for such teachers, although, with its long history, undoubtedly the most 'eminent', although no longer 'pre-eminent' among them.²⁰ Some idea of IRLT's current activities, and the importance to its members of pre-war IRET work, may be given by describing a relatively recent Annual Convention, held on 8–9 November 1997. The programme included: a plenary lecture on 'University Entrance Examinations and English' (indicating the strength of the pressure these examinations still exert on secondary level English teaching); a discussion between Professors Imura Motomichi and Ozasa Toshiaki (whose important recent studies have greatly informed this and the last chapter) on 'How should Palmer's work be interpreted today?'; a demonstration lesson (exemplifying characteristic IRET/IRLT features including 'oral introduction', oral 'story reproduction' and 'writing', as opposed to Japanese to English translation, all on the basis of textbook contents); parallel workshops presenting the results of teacher-research; and a report on a major IRLT research project concerning the introduction of oral work to teachers who have not previously been using English in their classes (IRLT 1997: 4–6). IRLT publishes less itself than its pre-war predecessor, although articles written by its various research groups have appeared regularly in the two most widely circulated magazines for secondary school English teachers: *Eigokyoiku* (*The English Teacher's Magazine*) and *Gendai Eigokyoiku* (*Modern English Teaching*), published by Taishukan and Kenkyusha, respectively. Both independently and collaboratively, however, many of its members are active in the production of teacher's guides, textbooks and other materials.

Although, in my initial literature review (Chapter 1), I emphasized the value of Japanese historical studies relating to Palmer, it should also be noted that the Japanese interest in Palmer is rooted in current concerns. Thus, Niisato (1991) has

20 Indeed, JACET [the Japan Association of College English Teachers], which hosted the 1999 AILA Conference in Tokyo, was itself originally formed, in the early 1960s, as an 'off-shoot' of the more secondary school-oriented IRLT (IRLT 1994: 106–07).

explicitly discussed the contemporary relevance of Palmer's teaching methodology, Kosuge (1993) has drawn contemporary lessons from the role in reform played by Palmer, and Yamamoto (1996) has shown how the syllabus of Palmer's (1929b) *The First Six Weeks of English* has been interpreted in recent textbooks and a widely-used English-by-radio series. IRLT has remained true to its reforming heritage, also, in playing a leading role in the activities of *Kaizenkyo* (The Association for the Improvement of Foreign Language Education), which presents annual suggestions for reform to the Ministry of Education. Indeed, the hope of the editors of Palmer's *Selected Writings*, as expressed by Shiozawa (1995), is that the writings which have informed their own and their colleagues' participation in the various research, study and teacher education activities still carried on with vigour by IRLT may be found to be relevant, in turn, by future generations of teachers and researchers both inside and outside Japan.

There is clearly a paradox here in that, whereas Palmer's memory is very much kept alive in Japan (where his ideas may be seen to have had a lasting impact only on the more 'methodologically aware' members of the English teaching profession), there is widespread ignorance of his work in the UK, where it ended up having a much more pervasive influence. This paradox will be explored further in Chapter 10, which examines the way Palmer's legacy to UK-based ELT was mediated, taken for granted, and systematically ignored.

9.1 Settling down

On returning to England, Palmer bought a house (named ‘Cooper’s Wood’) with three acres of land in Felbridge, near East Grinstead in Sussex.¹ According to his daughter’s account, he had admired the houses there during one of his cycling trips in his twenties (Anderson 1969: 136). He also took up new duties as a consultant and textbook author for Longmans, Green.

As is reported in 1937b, Palmer set to work at Cooper’s Wood to construct a Japanese-style garden combined with model railway which would represent the ‘syntax plan of the English language’. Together the garden and the railway are termed a ‘syntax-scape’ in 1937b (see also Anderson 1969: 159). In February materials for the construction of a Japanese-style room were shipped to England as a token of appreciation from Japanese teachers of English, and in November Palmer sent photographs back to Japan to show that it had arrived and that he had installed it in the sunroom at Cooper’s Wood (Imura 1997: 261). Following Palmer’s death, this tearoom was donated to the British Museum, where it (presumably) remains in storage.

In April, Palmer met Sakurai Joji, the former chairman of the IRET Board of Administration, who was visiting London both to attend a conference and to receive an Honorary Fellowship at UCL (Imura 1997: 216). Palmer was to recall this meeting in a later (1939b) obituary of Sakurai. On 7 July war broke out between Japan and China. Letters written by Palmer to a former colleague, Mori Masatoshi, show the extent to which he was distressed by Japanese actions in, as he saw it, provoking this war (Tanaka 1993).

While Palmer was undoubtedly working in 1936–37 on several types of publication for Longmans, Green, this work was not to bear fruit until 1938. In the meantime, he had persuaded another publisher, Harrap, to embark on a series of

1 My main secondary sources for biographical information on Palmer’s final years are Anderson 1969, Imura 1997 and Tanaka 1991b. I have also referred to primary sources, as indicated.

simplified readers, the 'Thousand-word English' series, which he was to co-edit with A.S. Hornby.

On 17 March Palmer was invited to address the Luncheon Club of the Japan Society, London, on 'The English language in Japan'. His talk, which presents an optimistic view of the achievements of IRET, was published as 1938d. Later in the same year, Palmer attended the Third International Congress of Phonetic Sciences in Ghent, Belgium, and was to lament (in both 1938g and 1944c) the exaggerated attention paid there to experimental phonetics at the expense of phonetic applications to the teaching of foreign languages.

9.2 'Thousand-word English'

The 'Thousand-word English' series of simplified readers was developed collaboratively with Hornby, following Palmer's return to UK. Palmer himself contributed 1937g, h, i and, later, 1939a, and 1940a and b to the series. Hornby was even more productive overall, sending a number of adaptations for the series from Tokyo.²

In 1937d (p. 7), Palmer and Hornby together explain the principles underlying 'Thousand-word English', which is evidently based on the IRET 1000-word vocabulary (1934c). Implicitly contrasting their scheme with Basic English, they emphasize that it

is not intended in any sense as a substitute for ordinary English for the purpose of international communication. It is simply one of several similar plans of providing foreign students of English with a first elementary vocabulary embodied in (a) a word-list and (b) interesting reading-matter composed almost entirely within the limits of that list.

In the foreword to each volume in the series (see, for example, 1937g: 7), the vocabulary is further defined as being based primarily on one thousand dictionary

2 Namely, *Old Greek Stories* (1937), *The Adventures of Odysseus* (1937) and *Stories from Grimm* (1939) (all for the 'Junior Series'), and (for the 'Senior Series') *The Adventures of Deerslayer* (1937), *Stories of Robin Hood* (1937?), *More Stories of Robin Hood* (1938), *Stories of the Great Discoverers* (1938) and *Stories from Don Quixote* (1938).

entries, with each caption-word entry including its inflected forms and derivatives, its compoundings and collocations and its chief extensions of meaning. What is claimed to be novel about 'Thousand-word English' (and similar vocabularies) is that 'instead of more or less haphazard selections of words drawn up according to the subjective and more or less careless judgment of compilers, without testing or experiment, it is based on certain definite principles of selection, confirmed by experiment and long experience' (1937g: 7).

9.3 Work for Longmans, Green

A Grammar of English Words (1938h) and *The New Method Grammar* (1938i) constitute innovative attempts to relate previously unapplied IRET work on lexis and syntax to the needs of learners of English as a foreign language, although according to Bongers (1947: 84) the former book had had an even longer gestation period, its nucleus having been provided by a manuscript of 1912 dealing with the difficulties of structural words. *A Grammar of English Words* evidently parallels the joint 'Thousand-word English' project with Hornby but pays greater attention to IRET research findings on collocations. Special attention is paid also to construction-patterns (including verb-patterns), the distinction between countable and uncountable nouns and the peculiarities of the twenty-four 'anomalous finites' (see Cowie 1999 for a detailed assessment; also, Nakao 1998: 42–43).

In fact, as its title only partially indicates, *A Grammar of English Words* represents Palmer's own attempt at a new-type 'learner's dictionary'. In 1935 Michael West had brought out his *New Method English Dictionary*, co-authored with J.G. Endicott, and this is generally considered to be the first English–English dictionary specifically for learners of English as a foreign language. However, Palmer's *A Grammar of English Words* has been described as 'remarkable for being concerned almost entirely with the learner's productive needs' (Rundell 1998: 317). It was thus a 'seminal encoding dictionary [which] pointed the way forward by providing a systematic account of verb complementation', an account which Hornby elaborated and refined in his own, more widely-known (1942) dictionary' (ibid.).

West and Endicott's (1935) dictionary was itself just one component within an ongoing Longmans, Green publishing project entitled 'New Method', this having been initiated in 1926 with the first of West's 'New Method Readers' (see Appendix 6.3). Palmer's energies were integrated into this project, even though he had never shared West's 'reading first' emphasis. Just as *A Grammar of English Words* emphasizes language production as much as, if not more than comprehension, Palmer's *The New Method Grammar* (1938i) reflects IRET rather than existing 'New Method' priorities in emphasizing the teaching of grammar for production (cf. 1928o-r), while his *New Method Practice Books* (1938k, l) and accompanying *Teacher's Handbooks* (1938 m, n) also make no concessions to a 'reading first' approach, providing instead exercises and ideas for oral and written sentence production.

Howatt (1984: 235) describes *The New Method Grammar* as 'a brave, but not entirely successful, attempt to teach grammar to younger learners through an analogy with railway networks'. With its 'direct-object stations', 'prepositional branch-lines', and so on, this work revolves around a simplified representation (in the 'Key Map' at the end of the book) of the 'General Synoptic Chart showing the syntax of the English sentence' which had formed the basis for the identification of construction-patterns in Palmer 1934aa.³ As such, *The New Method Grammar* has a not immediately obvious, serious connection both with the 'generative' substitution method and ergonomics of Palmer's London years (1916a-c, 1917b) and with the IRET work on verb-patterns for encoding purposes which was ultimately to find its most useful application in Hornby, Gatenby and Wakefield's (1942) *Learner's Dictionary*.

Just prior to the outbreak of war, Palmer's interest in French was revived, perhaps as a result of the long-standing involvement of Longmans, Green in textbook publishing in this area. As Bond (1953: 122) relates, Michael West had also shown an interest in the production of simplified French reading materials, from the late 1920s onwards. Bond (ibid.: 352) suggests that Palmer's *Premier livre*

3 It is interesting to note, in this connection, that A. S. Hornby's daughter recalls visiting Palmer at his home in Tokyo with her father (probably in 1934), and that the two men were engrossed in discussion of a model railway set up in one of Palmer's rooms (Interview with Phyllis Willis, 29 August 1998). The connection, also, with Palmer's Felbridge 'syntax-scape' is clear, and has been indicated by Howatt (1984: 235).

de français (1939e) and the other books in the same Longmans, Green series (1940c and 1949d), as well as his and West's (1950) *Premier livre de lecture* and, by analogy, other (1952, 1953) books in this series were produced primarily for use in the Belgian Congo.⁴

9.4 World War II

With the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, Palmer's son Tristram was called up, becoming a sergeant in the Royal Air Force. Palmer also turned his attention to the war effort, becoming an air raid warden (Anderson 1969: 160) and contributing a number of publications which reflected an eclectic variety of interests (among them 1939f and 1939g, and, in subsequent years, 1940d–f, 1940g, and 1941).

A letter from Palmer to his daughter dated 23 January 1940 reveals that he was showing interest in a British Council post in Iraq, and that Longmans, Green were encouraging him to take it.⁵ He believed, however, that his chances of being appointed were '50/50', revealing suspicions that his appointment was being blocked by Basic English supporters in high places. In this letter, Palmer indicates also that he had recently been offered the post of senior lectureship in Japanese at the School of Oriental Studies (which had relocated to Cambridge), but he had declined for the following reasons, not expressed in his official refusal: '1. I'm too busy; 2. Pay not good enough; 3. I don't know Japanese' (Palmer is probably referring here to an insufficient command of *written* Japanese, since his abilities in spoken Japanese were, by all accounts, reasonably good (cf. Jimbo 1961, Redman 1967b)).

At this time, other members of the Longmans, Green department were departing for posts in Egypt and West Africa, and Palmer notes that 'Major [H. E.]

4 A letter from Palmer to his daughter dated 23 January 1940 (see note 5 below) seems to confirm this suggestion, at least with regard to the *Premier livre de français* series: 'Congo Course Book One Part Two [i.e. 1940c] manuscript returned from the Congo with full approval and most helpful suggestions and advice for the further work'.

5 Palmer to Dorothée Anderson, 23 January 1940, in PFVA.

Harman' (who was to assist him with 1940g) would soon be in charge of the department. In preparation for a possible departure, Palmer appears to have been hard at work 'clearing up all the textbook work [. . .] Among other things the huge *Vocabulary Register* which records the first occurrence of every word in all the books' (presumably, Palmer refers here to bringing to an end the Harrap 'Thousand-word English' series: although the Register he mentions was never published, 1940a and b were to be the last readers in the series).

Palmer's work on French continued with the production of a series of three pocket-sized booklets in anticipation of a British Expeditionary Force invasion of France (1940d–f). The series title ('Just What You Want to Say in French') and perhaps its 'concept' are borrowed from a booklet by his father (Palmer, E. 1914) which had served a similar military purpose in the First World War.

Palmer's (1940g) *The Teaching of English to Soldiers* is similarly a contribution to the war effort with possible civilian applications. As this book's Preface (pp. 7–8) makes clear, it constitutes a response to inquiries made by units of the King's African Rifles and Royal West African Frontier Force for suitable books for teaching English to African soldiers, though 'with slight modifications to those paragraphs that suggest an African background, the book is eminently suitable for use in India', and Part I could serve as a handbook 'in Mission and other schools, or be utilized by teachers in primary schools in those countries where English is taught as a foreign language'. Being designed on the assumption that the instructor has little or no experience in the teaching of English as a foreign language (p. 9), the book provides very clear, untechnical explanations of Palmer's basic approach to the teaching of oral English. For example (p. 9):

The various grammatical categories are replaced by 'language-situations'. Instead of talking about nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc., we talk about the naming and describing of objects and actions.

and (pp. 10–11):

There are three stages of learning:

1. *Receiving* knowledge.
2. *Fixing* it in the memory by repetition.
3. *Using* the knowledge by real practice. [. . .]

Now the *giving* and *fixing* of knowledge is the work of the Instructor in the ordinary course of the *lessons*. The using of the knowledge as a rule takes place not in the course of the lessons but in the ordinary course of the day's work.

So the Instructor's first and chief business is to give knowledge and fix it in the pupil's memory. He therefore

- (a) Makes statements (i.e. gives knowledge),
- (b) Asks questions (i.e. fixes knowledge by practice).

The Presentation–Practice–Production lesson-plan model which has continued to inform initial ELT teacher training in Britain until the present day is clearly implicit in this advice to beginning teachers, with the last 'use' or 'real practice' phase being catered for (in Part II of 1940g) by means of a variety of suggestions for transferring instruction 'from the classroom to the field' and thus providing 'ample opportunities for understanding and using the spoken word in the form of fairly fluent speech': 'the meaning and simple description of objects, for instance, can be carried out at a fairly early stage on the parade ground, in the men's quarters, in the village or in the open country' (p. 101), while role-play exercises can be based on sentry routine. At times, Palmer's suggestions for language-use activities markedly resemble a 'weak' form (Howatt 1984: 286–87) of communicative approach. Thus (p. 119):

Up to a certain point in the course of teaching, the men have been given opportunities for saying things in English. What they have said has generally been prompted by questions or by a more or less artificially created situation. When the men have arrived at a state of sufficient proficiency, they must be given ample opportunities for saying things in English prompted only by actual and natural environments. You have to train them, in fact, in what is called 'Free Oral Composition'.

The question you have to put to yourself is: What can I do to make this man speak English to me for some minutes?

One effective means of doing so is to send a man on scout duty and subsequently to call upon him to report. This procedure, of course, runs parallel to the ordinary course of military training.

Palmer's (1940h) *The Teaching of Oral English* contains similar practical advice. This was to be his last major work on teaching procedures, although the *International Course*, his 'crowning achievement' as a textbook writer (Mackin 1965: v), was still to come. Palmer did not leave for Iraq as he had, it seems,

wanted, and there were to be no more publications for Longmans, Green until after the war.

Palmer's only publication in 1941 was a small booklet for the learning of Morse Code which contains hints for memorization and ideas for controlled practice, in the pocket-sized format employed previously in his (1940d–f) English-French phrase book and concise dictionaries.

On or around 3 July 1942 Palmer's only son, Tristram, was killed in action over Eenrum, Holland, aged twenty-one.⁶ As Anderson (1969: 160) reports, Palmer 'never really recovered from the shock and from then on his health deteriorated'. He suffered from severe insomnia and bouts of depression afterwards.

At the end of an article Palmer wrote in 1942 for *Oversea Education* on 'Foreign language teaching: Past, present and future' (1942a) there is a list of topics for future investigation which indicates that Palmer was even at this time hoping to engage in collaborative research of a relatively 'academic' nature. A detailed (1942) plan for collaborative phraseological research also appears in Bongers 1947 (this is listed as Palmer 1947c in the bibliography at the end of this thesis). In connection with these continuing ambitions, Reginald Close, who met Palmer during his 1944 visit to South America (see 9.6 below), reports as follows:

I remember Palmer telling me that he had tried to arouse interest in the foundation of an Institute for Research in [. . .] English Language Teaching in London and that he was disappointed by the lack of response from the people he met in London. However, the lack of response was probably due to the fact that the Second World War was either imminent or in progress. He was then appointed to Buenos Aires, where he hoped to find sponsors for an Institute like the one with which he had been associated in Tokyo. But again he was disappointed.⁷

9.5 Work for Evans

Despite his ill health, Palmer saw through the publication of the Italian (1943a) and French (1943b) versions of his new *International English Course* in 1943. Writing

6 Air Force War Records of Deaths 1939–48, Family Records Centre, London.

7 Reginald Close to Tanaka Masamichi, date unknown, cited in Imura 1997: 243–44.

now for a new publisher, Evans, Palmer returned with these books to his roots in bilingual course design (cf. his Verviers publications), showing once again that he was not dogmatically attached to a monolingual methodology. For the necessary translations of these and subsequent versions, the publishers and/or Palmer gained the collaboration of a number of teachers attached to the University of London. The bilingual approach is justified, and the relationship with companion readers is explained in 'A Personal Note to the Reader' at the beginning of each volume in the accompanying 'Plain English' Library:

Much time and infinite labour are saved for the student by the publication of *The International Course in English* in the mother tongue of the learner [. . .]

The instruction and practice given in *The International Course in English* are so effective that the student is able to proceed direct to extensive reading of texts written in plain but adequate English. The Plain English Library may therefore be regarded as a valuable extension of the International Course.

Ultimately, separate editions of Palmer's *International English Course* were to appear for speakers of Dutch, Spanish, Polish and Czech, in addition to Italian and French, with further Greek, Norwegian, German, Russian and Arabic editions being planned at different times although none of the latter were in fact to be completed.⁸ Palmer had also become series editor for an Evans 'Plain English' Library. However, this was to consist simply of reissues of readers from the by now defunct Harrap 'Thousand-Word English' series, sometimes with slightly changed titles.

9.6 Lecture tour in South America

Palmer undertook a lecture tour in South America from May to June 1944, visiting Buenos Aires, Montevideo and Rio de Janeiro at the invitation of the British Council (Ozasa 1995a: 131).⁹ There is some suggestion (see the letter from

⁸ Details of planned editions appear on the back cover of readers in the 'Plain English' Library.

⁹ On 2 February 1944, he had also given a public lecture on 'Some problems in the teaching of spoken English to foreign learners' at University College London (*The Times*, 2 February 1944).

Reginald Close cited above) that he had not only been invited for lectures but ‘appointed’ to take up an advisory position in Buenos Aires. Close (ibid.) ascribes Palmer’s failure to gain support for the establishment of an Institute in South America partly to his ‘precarious state of health’: ‘In Buenos Aires I found him to be a sick man, worn out by his exertions and he needed some one to nurse him. He showed all the symptoms of having suffered a nervous breakdown’. Nevertheless, Palmer’s lectures were a success, as Mackin (1990) recalls, and those in Rio de Janeiro from 30 May to 1 June were transcribed and published in the same year, as Palmer 1944c. Although there were plans for him to give further lectures, he was forced by ill health to return to England ‘a very sick man’ (Anderson 1969: 181).

Palmer demonstrated clearly in his first (1944c) lecture that he saw himself as a reformer in the tradition of Viëtor (cf. also Palmer 1933n), Sweet and Jespersen. However, his impression at the end of his own career was:

that by the third decade of this century the reform impetus had spent itself, that its efforts had resulted neither in failure nor in any conclusive or universal success, but rather in a series of stalemates. Certain it is that in England today a generation of language teachers has arisen who know little or nothing about the history of their profession nor of the controversies by which it has been marked. In few teacher-training colleges, in few university departments, are prescribed the works of Sweet or Jespersen or of the linguistic authorities who succeeded them.

(Palmer 1944c: 15–16)

9.7 Final publications

In 1944 or 1945 Palmer had reissued 1937i in the ‘Plain English’ Library, under the original title, *Aesop’s Fables*. This was to be the last of only four in the series, even though its back cover promised ‘Other volumes [. . .] when ready’.¹⁰ The *International English Course* itself appears to have still been going strong, despite the following comment by Mackin (1965: v) with regard specifically to 1944b:

10 The reissue is undated, but seems to have been published in either 1944 or 1945, following publication of 1944a and 1944b (which are indicated as already available in publicity on the back cover), and prior to publication of 1945, which is not yet indicated as available.

immediately after the distribution of a few hundred copies it had to be withdrawn because of unforeseen contractual difficulties. This was a bitter disappointment not only to Palmer himself, but also to those few teachers who, having had the opportunity of studying the book, had appreciated its great value as a teaching instrument and had looked forward to using it in the classroom.

As we shall see, the course did run into problems, but these seem to have occurred later than Mackin suggests. In 1945 Evans issued a second edition of the (1943a) Italian version, and an advertisement on p. 211 of the (1946) Czech version indicates that, while previous plans for Russian and German adaptations had been dropped, Greek and Norwegian translations were still being projected. Arabic had been added to the planned list, and previously issued adaptations (including Spanish) were all still available. In addition, an *Evans English Conversation Dictionary* is promised (on p. 212) for the languages treated:

Versions of this Dictionary, prepared by Dr. Palmer as a companion to and extension of the International English Course, will be published in learners' own languages as rapidly as possible. The French Version — *Le Dictionnaire Phraséologique* — will be ready in 1946.

No versions of this dictionary were ever in fact published, and no further adaptations of the *International English Course* were issued. It is probable, then, that 1946 saw the beginnings of the contractual difficulties referred to by Mackin (cited above).

In 1947, a study of the vocabulary control movement appeared (Bongers 1947) which highlighted Palmer's achievements in particular, and contained a previously unpublished memorandum (1947c in my bibliography of Palmer's works) on "“formulas” such as conversational expressions, sayings, proverbs, quotations, and other similar collocations' (Bongers 1947: 224).

In 1947b, the editors pay tribute to Thorndike's achievement in having compiled a dictionary (the *Thorndike Century Junior Dictionary* originally published in 1935, revised in 1942) expressly for children. They describe this as having been a 'piece of pioneering [. . .] It limits the vocabulary to the words most frequently heard, read, and used by children, and determines the scope of that

vocabulary, not by guessing but by counting' (1947b: viii). In his final years, then, Palmer appears to have reconciled himself to the approach of the 'word counters', as represented by the foremost among them, E.L. Thorndike. At the same time, in his 1947a preface to a work on artificial international languages, he indicates clearly that his work in the mid-1930s with Thorndike, West and Faucett for the Carnegie Conference on 'English as a World Language' had not diminished his enthusiasm for less hegemonic alternatives.

In October 1949, Palmer received news that Evans had decided to discontinue both the *International English Course* and the 'Plain English' Library under pressure from C.K. Ogden (whose books Evans also published).¹¹ The following month, Palmer succumbed to a heart attack, as his daughter reports:

Father collapsed suddenly on 16 November 1949 in his study, surrounded by his beloved books, where I know he would have wished to be. He once said to me: 'I feel a bit lonely sometimes in my field of work'. He would have been overjoyed had he known that all his hard work and research continued to be of use in the English teaching world of today.

(Anderson 1969: 161)

Mackin (1964: vi–vii) provides further insight into Palmer's doubts as to his legacy, in the following reminiscence and overall assessment:

Palmer once asked me if I had any idea for what aspect of his work he would be remembered. Was there, he wondered, any particular contribution he had made that would be specially valued? It was not easy to answer his question. The suggestion that his writings on method constituted his most valuable work did not satisfy him, in view of his wider linguistic interests; but from the point of view of the language teacher, it is probably true. Palmer wondered, too, wherein lay his most original contribution within the general field of methodology. He himself was reluctant to put a name to his 'method', shying away from the term 'eclectic' [. . .] because of its unsatisfactory

11 A. S. Hornby to Dorothee Anderson, 13 October 1956, in PFVA. Hornby discusses the fate of the Harrap 'Thousand-Word English' series, as follows: 'I have the idea that all the volumes in the 1000-Word English Series were to be included in [the] Plain English Library and that Harrap surrendered all rights to Evans Bros. You remember, of course, how Ogden's interference compelled Evans Bros. to abandon their plans for the International Course and the Plain English Library. Perhaps Harrap then considered that rights reverted to them'. In notes made with reference to this letter by Dorothee (also in PFVA) she writes: 'For various reasons (OGDEN) Evans Bros. were compelled to abandon their plans in regard to 'Plain English Library' and on 6 Oct. 1949 advised HEP that the copyright for this series (also International Course) reverted to H.E.P.'.

associations; but the term is often used now to refer to the kind of approach he advocated.

Palmer's doubts appear to have been confirmed by the fact that no obituary appeared in *The Times* or other national newspapers in Britain, as reported with some surprise by Tickoo (1968). Palmer fell ill and died at the dawning of a 'new age' in English language teaching which he had, more than anyone else, heralded, but to which he could not make a *direct* contribution. The way his legacy was nevertheless mediated will, however, be the focus of the following chapter.

The final years of Palmer's life had seen a return both to the Longmans, Green fold and to collaborative work with Michael West, who was to survive him by twenty-three years. Fittingly, also, among Palmer's last publications were — aside from the (1949a, 1949b) *New English Course* (originally for the South African market, though later revised for the Gold Coast) — a textbook (1949d) and a series of readers (1950, 1952, 1953) for French, the language in relation to which he had himself, fifty years previously, begun to derive so many of his unique and influential insights for (English as a) foreign language teaching.

As we have seen, Palmer was himself unable, due to illness, to play an active role following the end of the war, and he died soon afterwards, in 1949. These were the years, however, when ELT can be said to have become properly 'established' in the UK, in the sense that establishment bodies — namely, the British Council, the University of London Institute of Education, the BBC and the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) — moved in parallel and, increasingly, in cooperation with one another to accord the teaching of English as a foreign language a status and to provide it with a UK base which it had not enjoyed in the pre-war or wartime years. In section 10.1 below I show how ELT was 'born' and became firmly established in the half-decade after the end of the war before moving on to consider (in 10.2) how, despite his lack of direct involvement in this process, Palmer's methodological legacy informed ELT right up until the mid-1970s, and how it was principally mediated as ELT became established. The chapter ends with a broader analysis (in 10.3), in which I consider not only ways in which Palmer's legacy may have informed the post-war era more widely but also ways in which his legacy was *not* taken up, and possible reasons for the lack of acknowledgment of his influence generally within post-war ELT.

10.1 The establishment of ELT

In the same way that the birth of applied linguistics (in the USA) is usually dated to the appearance of the term in the subtitle of the first (1948) issue of the journal *Language Learning*, edited in Michigan by Charles C. Fries, 'ELT' can be said to have taken recognizable form as a UK-based enterprise in 1946, with the appearance in October of that year of the first issue of the periodical *English Language Teaching*. Dangers of anachronism are immediately apparent in that, just as applied linguistic activity by no means began with the work of Fries and his associates (as can be seen from my discussion of the Reform Movement in Chapter 2, and Palmer's work as discussed in the body of this thesis), serious thought had

begun to be given in Britain to problems of teaching English as a foreign language from around the time of the (1934–35) Carnegie Conference onwards. There is anachronism in the forward direction too, in the sense that the acronym ‘ELT’ did not itself begin to be used in Britain until the 1950s (see 1.2 above). Nevertheless, the first issue of *English Language Teaching* did represent a new departure, both in the way it indicated clear governmental (British Council) acknowledgment of the importance and specificity of teaching English as a foreign language and due to the fact that it provided an important new focus for UK-based activity in the field. Over the ensuing years, and up until the present day, *English Language Teaching* (now known as *ELT Journal*) has continuously served as a focal point, to the extent indeed that the journal’s title, in abbreviated form, was gradually adopted as the name for the enterprise, or profession, as a whole. For these reasons, and with the caveats I have mentioned, dating the birth of ‘ELT’ to 1946 does appear to be justified.

Underlying and surrounding the instigation of the journal were other events which indicated a new status for etsol, and which further justify the identification of the end of World War II as a turning point. Among these was the creation of the new post of ‘linguistic adviser’ at British Council headquarters, presumably in 1945, a post which was filled by A.S. Hornby (see Appendix 8.1 for a full account of his career). As he later recalled, initially ‘This meant chiefly desk-work: the reading of reports from British Council centres in many parts of the world, much correspondence, and dealing with files’ (Hornby 1966: 3). During the wartime years the number of British Institutes set up by the Council, particularly in the Middle East, had increased dramatically, and Hornby had himself been Acting Director of the Anglo-Persian Institute in Teheran. In the area of English teaching, the Council’s focus at this point was firmly on its own centres overseas, and *English Language Teaching* — Hornby’s own brainchild (Hornby 1966: 3) — was presumably intended, or at least justified mainly as a way for teachers in these centres to keep in touch with one another and with headquarters. The journal may also have been conceived partly as a form of ongoing teacher-training for the Institutes. Certainly, the tone of most articles throughout the late 1940s and 1950s was prescriptive, and the contents were usually practical and non-academic in tone.

In the first few years of its existence, the journal also served as a way to inform the world of further developments in the UK which were signalling a new status and base for the teaching of English as a foreign language, namely at the University of London Institute of Education (Gurrey 1947), BBC 'English by Radio' programmes (Quinault 1947), and UCLES (Wyatt and Roach 1947). The main publishers of English learning and teaching materials (Oxford University Press, Longmans and, to a lesser extent, Macmillan) were also given good publicity via book reviews and, from September 1947 onwards, advertisements. Below I shall describe in more detail the development of and interconnections among these 'pillars' of ELT up to the early 1950s, before returning to further developments within the British Council and at the journal *English Language Teaching*, the central, unifying pillar of them all.

As we have seen (in Chapter 3), the Institute of Education had already been an important player from before the war, and its role was extended in the post-war years. Indeed, there were no other universities involved in EFL teacher education or research apart from London until 1957, when the School of Applied Linguistics was established in Edinburgh.¹ For the 1945–46 session, under the continuing leadership of Percival Gurrey but with input from guest lecturers including A.S. Hornby (whose contribution was termed 'particularly valuable'), there was a 'complete reorganisation of the courses and programme', with the practical aspects of EFL teaching being developed, and courses on phonetics, the speaking of English, literature and practical teaching being introduced for the first time. The annual intake of (almost exclusively overseas) students had increased to about fifty, in comparison with half that number in the immediate pre-war years, and it had become 'clear that the work being done in this field at the Institute is becoming

1 This is not to deny the importance of university-based phoneticians, for example in writing articles for the early issues of *English Language Teaching*, in particular David Abercrombie (later to be centrally involved in the establishment of the Edinburgh School of Applied Linguistics), who contributed a number of articles which were later reprinted in *Problems and Principles. Studies in the Teaching of English as a Second Language* (1956, Longmans, Green). In this case, as in the case of early contributions to the journal by P.A.D. MacCarthy (1949, 1950) and J.D. O'Connor (1951), phoneticians based at SOAS and UCL, respectively, the tradition of 'practical phonetics' established by Daniel Jones (and, before him, Sweet and Passy) was extended. Jones himself had had an important advisory role with the British Council during the wartime years and contributed one early article to the new journal (Jones 1947) and an obituary of Palmer (Jones 1950a). However, EFL was not the primary research or teaching interest of these contributors.

better known, and the demand [. . .] is likely to continue to grow'.² In the following (1946–47) session, the course continued to be actively developed under Gurrey, and it was felt that 'the Institute, through this course, has acquired a key position in influencing the development of the teaching of English at all levels throughout the world'. Indeed, 'The further extension of the work of the Institute in this direction' was one of the main points in the Institute's overall development programme for the following five years.³ Primarily, this extension involved a request for a Chair and extra staff, the institution of a Diploma, and the planning of teaching practice abroad.⁴ The first of these requests was met quickly in the following year (1948), when a Department of English as a Foreign Language was constituted officially for the first time,⁵ with Bruce Pattison as its first Chair (Gurrey left at this point to become Professor at the University College of the Gold Coast (Ogawa 1964b: 240; see also Aldrich 2002).⁶ The next year (1949), a one-year 'Diploma in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language' was instituted, being 'confined to experienced teachers who have already had primary training in their own countries and who can profit from a course in the linguistic and literary principles of methodology in English'.⁷ One feature of the course was two months' teaching practice with Welsh-speaking pupils in Carnaervonshire (the original idea of teaching practice in Continental Europe was not put into practice until later, when students began to be sent to Malta, and, later, Madrid). In contrast with 1943–44, when it was felt that 'There is as yet little sign of any adequate general recognition [in the UK] of the

2 The source for all details of the 1945–46 session reported here is 'English as a foreign language', *University of London Institute of Education Annual Report 1945–46*, in Institute of Education Archive.

3 'English as a foreign language', *University of London Institute of Education Annual Report 1946–47*, in Annual Reports file, Institute of Education Archive.

4 'English as a foreign language', *Institute of Education Development Policy: Quinquennium 1947–52*, in Annual Reports file, Institute of Education Archive.

5 Unsigned typescript beginning with the words 'During its second session the Department of English as a Foreign Language [. . .]': a supporting document for *University of London Institute of Education Annual Report 1949–50*, in Annual Reports file, Institute of Education Archive.

6 Pattison was to remain in this influential post until 1976, when he finally retired and was succeeded by Henry G. Widdowson (Brumfit 2000: 673).

7 'Courses for Oversea Students, *University of London Institute of Education Annual Report 1949–50*, in Annual Reports file, Institute of Education Archive.

great importance of this field of study',⁸ by the end of the 1949–50 session there was a sense that:

The Department is already beginning to be recognised as a centre to which outside bodies can turn for advice on the teaching of English. It is also anticipated that provision will be made for British graduates proceeding abroad to teach English, whose needs are somewhat different from those which the present courses are designed to serve.⁹

By 1950 the staff of the department consisted of Pattison, A.V.P. Elliott, William F. Mackey and James A. Noonan. Reciprocating A.S. Hornby's initial involvement with the Institute's training programme, all these staff members, as we shall see, were to play important 'cross-over' roles for *English Language Teaching*, and, with Hornby also centrally involved, for the BBC, a second pillar of the new ELT establishment to which I now turn.

As Quinault (1947, 1948) reported in *English Language Teaching*, a significant new development of the wartime and immediate post-war years was the institution of BBC 'English by Radio' programmes. Five-minute monolingual programmes were first introduced into the European Service in July 1943. Quinault (1947: 119) explains that, due to time limitations,

There could [. . .] be no question of separate lessons for every country with explanations in each foreign language: a single series had to serve all listeners at the same time and make itself as clear as possible in English alone. So began what has since become perhaps the biggest experiment in language teaching by radio on purely 'direct method' lines.

(Quinault 1947: 119)

These programmes were broadcast every day to different broad areas of the Continent in turn, and were the parent of later programmes, with 'English by Radio' becoming the umbrella term for the various series which came to be produced (Quinault 1948: 49). While the wartime lessons had been propagandistic in content

8 'English as a foreign language', *University of London Institute of Education Annual Report 1943–44*, in Annual Reports file, Institute of Education Archive.

9 'Courses for Oversea Students', *University of London Institute of Education Annual Report 1949–50*, in Annual Reports file, Institute of Education Archive.

and flavour ('little chats with a message — the Allies are coming!'),¹⁰ following the end of the war there was a general recognition that the programmes were valuable and should be retained. Until 1948, the programmes continued to be produced on a shoe-string, and were independent from one another, not constituting any kind of series. In that year, however, more money was allotted, with the consequence that writers and presenters could be brought in from outside.¹¹ The parent, monolingual 'English by Radio' programme for the Continent was considered still to be justified (offering frequency and regularity of study, filling a need for broadcasts in areas where explanations in listeners' mother tongue could not be given, and providing valuable practice for relatively advanced learners as a stepping-stone to ordinary radio listening (Quinault 1948: 49–50)). There were additionally, however, two new series under the 'English by Radio' rubric: one for elementary learners, written by C.E. Eckersley, and another for relatively advanced learners, written and presented by Hornby (*ibid.*). For these the duration was extended from five minutes to fifteen minutes per programme,¹² and for the first time syllabi were drawn up in advance. Both of these courses involved a shift to bilingual teaching. Indeed, the series by Eckersley, centring on the 'Brown Family', was generally known as the 'bilingual course' and it involved a 'combination of English conversation and vernacular commentary' (Quinault 1948: 49).

In parallel with Eckersley's 'bilingual course', the 'Hornby series' was introduced in 1948 for relatively advanced learners. Quinault (1948: 49) described this as follows:

This series [. . .] differs from the Eckersley series in a number of ways. Assuming a fairly extensive vocabulary from the start, the conversations concern themselves not with further vocabulary-building, but with the discussion of characteristic features of English pronunciation, verb-usage, sentence-structure and word-meaning. The Hornby series is just now being broadcast with vernacular commentaries in the Arabic, Hindustani, Persian and Turkish services.

10 Interview with René Quinault, 5 January 1999. Indeed, German troops in Norway are said to have heard of the order to lay down their arms while listening to an 'English by Radio' lesson in the German Service (Tomalin and Quinault 1992: 112).

11 Interview with René Quinault.

12 Interview with René Quinault.

Thus, the range of broadcasts had by now been expanded into the Middle East and India. There were also signs of cooperation between the British Council and the BBC, as shown by 'English by Radio' editor René Quinault's (1947, 1948) articles for *English Language Teaching*. Additionally, a special supplement of 'Times and wavelengths of BBC English lessons for foreign students' was produced to accompany the November 1949 issue, which, considering the economic constraints of the time, seems also to have reflected a deliberate British Council strategy to promote BBC 'English by Radio'.

Still, there were no books or records associated with the radio series, but a decision was taken in the late 1940s to have have *published* series, and the first was *Listen and Speak*, a major new beginners' course devised by Elliott and Noonan of the Institute of Education, under the guidance of Pattison (who had been appointed as overall 'academic adviser' to BBC English by Radio).¹³ This was, again, a course meant for bilingual use which was widely distributed among the different language services at the time. Pattison had developed the following conception: explanations (to be carried out by an English native speaker in the studio and translated by a speaker of the relevant L1) were followed by dramatic dialogues (these being common to all the services) and then exercises (which were carried out in the same bilingual way as for initial explanations).¹⁴

In ensuing years, aside from enlisting the help of experienced teachers from the British Council and elsewhere (apart from Eckersley, Hornby and Institute of Education staff, eminent series authors/presenters included Michael West and W. Stannard Allen) (Tomalin and Quinault 1992: 112), Quinault also instituted a series of 'Talks for Teachers' involving, among others, Hornby, West and F.G. French (for more on French see Appendix 8.3).¹⁵ Thus, BBC 'English by Radio' was, like *English Language Teaching* but in spoken form, an important new medium by

13 Interview with René Quinault. The designation 'academic adviser' appears in 'Courses for Oversea Students', *University of London Institute of Education Annual Report 1949–50*, in Annual Reports file, Institute of Education Archive.

14 Interview with René Quinault.

15 Interview with René Quinault.

means of which British approaches to the teaching of English as a foreign language could be propagated on a worldwide scale.¹⁶

The names of Oxford and Cambridge were also both associated with the 'establishment' of ELT after the war, although both universities were involved in an indirect fashion, Oxford via its publishing arm (see below), and Cambridge via the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES). Just before the war the British Council had encouraged UCLES to extend its involvement in English examinations for foreign students, with an eye primarily on students in its own Institutes abroad. In 1939 the Lower Certificate in English examination was added to the Certificate of Proficiency in English which had been offered from as far back as 1913 (Wyatt and Roach 1947: 126–27). In 1941 formal collaboration between UCLES and the British Council was established (ibid.: 129), and in 1945 a new examination for advanced learners was instituted at the Council's request, leading to the Diploma of English Studies (ibid.: 127). The British Council exercised joint control over the content of these exams (ibid.: 130), and in 1947 the Council publicized them more widely, by means of an article in *English Language Teaching* by two UCLES Assistant Secretaries (Wyatt and Roach 1947). The Cambridge suite of examinations (which have since gone from strength to strength) was thus promoted through the direct intervention of the British Council, providing clear goals for teachers in the 'private sector', beginning with its own Institutes. Indeed, by 1952 the curricula in all the Council's Institutes (in Europe, Latin America and the Middle East) were based firmly on the syllabus of the Cambridge exams, and their growing influence is likely to be one explanation for the popularity of Stannard Allen's (1947) *Living English Structure* (see below), which had been written with these examinations specifically in mind (Allen 1947: viii).¹⁷

16 The importance of BBC English by Radio programmes in reaching learners around the world has been neglected in past accounts of ELT history (e.g. Howatt 1984, Phillipson 1992). The fact that René Quinault was invited, as Programme Organiser for the English by Radio Section, to the Makerere Conference in 1961 (see below) shows the importance which was attached to BBC English by Radio at the time; indeed, Makoni (1995) highlights the impact of the BBC overall in Africa, claiming in opposition to Phillipson (1992) that 'the position of the mother tongue speaker of English has been strengthened less through the British Council's activities and more by the BBC and the Voice of America'.

17 Minutes, [British Council] English Studies Advisory Committee, 22 January 1952, BW 138/1, in Public Records Office, Kew.

The major publishers (Oxford University Press and Longmans) also increased their activity in the immediate post-war years, although they preferred, in the main, to rely on reprints, revisions and adaptations of tried and trusted pre-war materials rather than invest in completely new courses. Thus, the best-known Longmans authors continued to be Eckersley (*Essential English for Foreign Learners*) and West (with his 'New Method' materials). Faucett's original *Oxford English Course* continued to be adapted for different countries or regions, principally by F.G. French, and formed the core of an 'Oxford Progressive English' list which was being promoted as an overall 'system'. There were, however, a few innovative materials and works of reference which signalled the beginnings of a new (structural) focus, notably W. Stannard Allen's (1947) *Living English Structure* (Longmans) and, both for OUP, Hornby's (1949) *Oxford Progressive English for Students in the Middle East* and Hornby, Gatenby and Wakefield's (1948) *A Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. For Longmans, Hornby's former IRET colleague E.V. Gatenby also published a new (1949–53) course for a particular region, in his case Turkey, where he had been sent by the British Council during the war and where he was to remain in a prestigious teacher training position until his death in 1955 (see Appendix 8.2). During and immediately following the war there was also a brief upsurge of activity in the area of teaching English to refugees and foreign servicemen based in Britain by means of bilingual materials (Palmer and Eckersley both contributed series of books with titles such as *Internationale Cursus in de Engelsche Taal* (Palmer 1944a, for Dutch learners), and *Essential English for Yugoslav Students* (Eckersley and Subotic 1947), but it was C.K. Ogden who had taken the lead, with books like *Basic English for Polish Students* (Ogden and Halpern 1941)). However, as the publishers' principal focus was transferred back to overseas markets, and, mainly, to school pupils rather than adult learners, these kinds of bilingual material faded from view (it should also be noted that both Ogden's and Palmer's bilingual series were issued by Evans, a publisher with no track record in EFL sales). Aside from Stannard Allen's (1947) *Living English Structure*, which was a grammar practice book rather than a fully-fledged 'course', with regard to adult learners there were no serious challengers to Eckersley's (monolingual) *Essential English* series (brought out in a revised edition in 1945) until the publication of the 'Hornby course' in 1954 (see below). It is important to

recognize that the UK and overseas private language school market — such an important sector in ELT today — only began to be very significant from the 1960s onwards, and the same was true of what became known in the 1960s as ‘teaching English to immigrants’.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, then, the publishers’ focus, like that of the British Council and the Institute of Education, was firmly on teaching overseas, and — even more than the British Council, with its own network of Institutes to consider — on school teaching by ‘non-native speaker’ teachers, not the teaching of adults by native speakers. This focus was reflected in the handful of books for teachers published up to 1950: Gatenby’s (1944) summary of ideas gathered in the course of his years of experience in Japan and, latterly, in Turkey was explicitly directed at ‘non-English’ (i.e. ‘non-native speaker’ teachers), while Morris (1945) similarly referred to his experience in Palestine, and the special problems confronting the teacher in lower schools in India and Africa as well as the Middle East. The three popularly slim volumes of French’s (1948–50) *The Teaching of English Abroad* also contained, as French explained in the first volume of the series, practical tips on school teaching for ‘teachers to whom English is a foreign language’ (p. 3), based primarily on ‘the experience which has been gathered over many years by teachers in Africa, India, Burma, Malaya, Japan and China’ (p. 1).

As this summary of activity in the years up to around 1950 has shown, there were important institutional developments which both reflected and established a new status in the UK for the teaching of English as a foreign language (with a focus on overseas contexts), while drawing heavily on pre-war and wartime experience. In terms of personnel, there was a good deal of continuity with previous years. Figures such as West, Eckersley and Gurrey had been based in Britain before the war, and continued to be professionally involved afterwards, while French, who had been in Burma, had already developed a strong working relationship with OUP which he subsequently extended. There was also an influx of ‘new blood’, however, best-represented by Hornby, in many ways *the* central figure in the developments of these years, and Gatenby. Both drew, nevertheless, on many years of experience overseas, in Japan, and, latterly, Persia and Turkey respectively, and in the absence from centre-stage of Palmer, the continuity of their particular contributions with pre-war IRET work was, as we shall see, to prove highly significant.

There was another kind of ‘continuity’, too, in the way the small number of men who were centrally involved in what I have termed the ‘establishment’ of ELT played cross-over roles, linking the main pillars of the new enterprise: Hornby’s part-time work for the Institute and the BBC, and Institute staff involvement with the BBC have been highlighted above, but the reciprocal links extended further. Some British Council officers (Stannard Allen, Hornby, Gatenby) developed fruitful relationships with the major publishers, together constituting a ‘new wave’ of materials writing expertise, while the already established authors West and Eckersley were called upon to advise the Council (in West’s case)¹⁸ and provide materials for the BBC (in Eckersley’s). In 1950 Hornby resigned from the British Council and from the editorship of *English Language Teaching* to become a full-time author for OUP, and an Editorial Board for the journal was constituted for the first time. Its members, apart from Hornby himself, were ‘the usual suspects’ from the Institute of Education, Elliott, Noonan, Pattison and Mackey. West, who had retained his own links with the Institute due to his continuing work on a final version of the Carnegie Report on vocabulary selection (West 1953), replaced Mackey on the Board when the latter departed for Canada in 1951. In 1952, R.T. Butlin, the new editor, lamented ‘the very limited number of experts available to contribute to the journal’.¹⁹

In this situation of extensive mutual relations among the small number of men at the head of the new ELT endeavour, it is perhaps unsurprising that a large

18 As a member of the British Council English Studies Advisory Committee which first met on 22 January 1952 (Minutes, English Studies Advosory Committee, 22 January 1952, BW 138/1, in Public Records Office, Kew).

19 Minutes, English Studies Advisory Committee, 22 January 1952, BW 138/1, in Public Records Office, Kew. Indeed, my own analysis shows that out of a total of one hundred and forty-four separate articles in the first five volumes of the journal (1946–51), half had been written by just nine contributors — A.S. Hornby himself (20), R. Kingdon (10), E.L. Tibbitts (10), E.V. Gatenby (9), M. West (7), D. Abercrombie (5), D. Hicks (4), R. Manvell (4) and W. Stannard Allen (3), almost all of them (with the exceptions of Abercrombie and West) British Council employees. It should be noted that Tibbitts’ ten articles were all on the same theme of ‘Pronunciation difficulties: corrective treatment’ and that both J.C. Catford and G.H. Phelps had, like Allen, contributed three articles each. Overall, fifty-eight different contributors were represented, with twenty-six writing two or more articles. To extend the analysis further, in volumes 5 to 10 (1951–56), there were fewer contributors overall — thirty-five — but with only twelve contributing two or more articles (those writing three or more were M. West (8), F.T. Wood (5), D. Abercrombie (4), H.A. Cartledge (4), W.E. Mackey (4), A.S. Hornby (3), P.A.D. MacCarthy (3) and R. Manvell (3). In volumes 11 to 15 (1957–61), forty-nine contributors were represented, with eleven contributing two or more articles (those writing three or more were L.A. Hill (8), M. West (8), and H.A. Cartledge (4)).

degree of consensus emerged early on regarding its ‘ethos’ and methodological underpinnings, a consensus whose ‘manufacture’ we shall examine further in the following section. What is remarkable, however, is the way this methodological consensus maintained its hold on British ELT throughout the 1950s and relatively turbulent 1960s, continuing largely unchallenged right up to the brink of the mid-1970s communicative ‘revolution’. This, too, is a phenomenon requiring further examination.

10.2 Palmer’s influence on post-war ELT orthodoxy

In this section we turn to methodology, and the way a particular overall approach became quite rapidly established as orthodoxy in British ELT circles in the post-war years. The consequences of this were far-reaching, as the approach began to be exported more deliberately from the newly established UK ‘centre’ outwards, especially in the 1960s when the British Council became more actively involved in curriculum development work and teacher-training overseas (see Phillipson 1992: 145–52)). In this section, while identifying the main characteristics of what I term ‘post-war ELT orthodoxy’, I shall show (in 10.2.1) how the establishment of this orthodoxy after 1946 had long-lasting and widespread effects, paying particular attention to the way the methodology was exported to India in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in a process which can be seen to have served as a model for expanded British Council teacher-training activity in the ‘periphery’ (Phillipson 1992). At the same time, in tracing the roots of this orthodoxy (10.2.2) I shall highlight the way it derived largely from pre-war IRET work, highlighting also the central importance of Hornby’s role in mediating Palmer’s legacy.

10.2.1 ‘S–O–S’: Post-war ELT orthodoxy

There is a series of films, with a textbook, produced in 1977 by The British Council English Teaching Division, BBC English by Radio and Television and the British Ministry for Overseas Development titled *Teaching Observed* (see Hobbs 1977). In the first six of these films, three teachers, from Sri Lanka, Ghana, and Singapore, are observed teaching ‘model lessons’ to primary school pupils. Despite the variety

of contexts involved, the procedures they adopt for introducing and practising new language share significant similarities. In the Sri Lankan lesson, pupils are helped to understand one meaning of the present perfect through seeing completed teacher and pupil actions or drawings of actions. In the Ghanaian classroom, the teacher introduces superlative forms of adjectives with reference to pupils' heights, drawings of vehicles on the board, the results of measuring tasks, and a race to see who is the fastest of three boys. The Singaporean teacher uses pictures drawn by pupils themselves to present occupation-related vocabulary and the question-answer pattern '*How do you know [he's a barber]?*' '*Because [he has a pair of scissors and a comb]*'. In each case a new language pattern is presented 'situationally' and only orally: 'Pupils imitated the teacher's model of speech and were able to understand the examples of the new pattern from seeing pictures, real objects and situations' (Hobbs 1977: 56). In each case, also, the next lesson stage consists of much controlled oral practice. Sometimes the practice is 'mechanical' (for example, in substitution drills), but frequently attempts are made to refer 'meaningfully' to pictures, real objects or classroom situations (for example, in a chain drill in the first lesson pupils state to one another what they have actually drawn; in the second lesson, they ask one another about pictures of differently sized objects provided by the teacher; in the third lesson they guess objects by feeling in a bag, and explain their guesses). Overall, the approach demonstrated and advocated for the primary level in these teacher training films can be described as 'structural' (in the sense that sentence patterns form the basic content of teaching), 'oral' (new language is presented and practised initially with no reference to written forms), and 'situational' (pictures, objects and classroom situations are used to maintain a focus on the meaning of what is being presented and practised).

'Structural-Oral-Situational' ('S-O-S'), indeed, is what Prabhu (1987) calls this kind of approach, and he notes that in southern India '[b]y about 1975, S-O-S was being regarded as a well-established method of teaching English'. As with the training films described above, the hand of the British Council was at work in this development; most famously, Council officers were behind a massive, self-styled 'campaign' of intensive teacher re-training in S-O-S pedagogy centred on Madras

between 1959 and 1963.²⁰ Although himself critical of the S–O–S approach, Prabhu (ibid.) recognizes its lasting influence, and characterizes its main features succinctly as follows:

The innovation consisted, essentially, of the use of structurally and lexically graded syllabuses, situational presentation of all new teaching items, balanced attention to the four language skills (but with listening and speaking preceding reading and writing), and a great deal of controlled practice using techniques such as the substitution table and choral repetition. This was in contrast to earlier procedures such as the translation and explication of written texts, the reading aloud and memorization of texts, and a good deal of explicit grammar in the form of sentence analysis and parsing.

(Prabhu 1987: 10)

Earlier, Widdowson (1968) identified similar characteristics of what, in his view, had by the late 1960s ‘become the accepted approach to the teaching of English as a second language’ (p. 117), in other words, ‘the approach to teaching English as a second language widely advocated and practised at present’ (ibid.). Similarly to Prabhu’s description, in Widdowson’s (ibid.) formulation the characteristics of this approach were described as the following:

- rejection of teaching by grammar and translation
- stress on the primacy of speech among the language skills
- emphasis on the need for structural grading
- stress on the presentation of language items through meaningful situations

In the same 1968 essay Widdowson wrote also that ‘the phrases “structural approach”, and “oral approach” have become articles in an act of faith’ (p. 154). Whatever the approach was called at the time, it is important to note Widdowson’s inclusion of the fourth point above in his description of contemporary orthodoxy,

20 Following Smith (1962), this campaign has often been referred to as the Madras ‘Snowball’, since a model of what is now known as ‘cascade training’ (that is, experts training teachers to train other teachers) was employed. Pennycook (1994: 151) comments ironically on the inappropriateness of this metaphor given the climate, but Lionel Billows, the chief architect of the scheme, was himself unhappy with the choice of phrase, preferring the term ‘MELT [Madras English Language Teaching] Campaign’ (Billows, unpublished manuscript titled ‘Madras Snowball — a Crash Education Programme’, in Billows family personal files). See Appendix 8.3 for an account of Billows’ career.

this referring to the ‘situational’ dimension which was characteristic both of ‘S–O–S’ in India and of the *Teaching Observed* films I have described above. Presentation and practice of new language in classroom situations is *not* generally considered to have been a defining feature of American versions of structural or oral approach (usually referred to nowadays as the ‘Audiolingual method’) (see Larsen-Freeman 2000, Chapter 4; Richards and Rodgers 2001, Chapter 4). This shows that, although the other three features were shared by the contemporary American structural or oral approach, Widdowson’s focus was firmly on a specifically *British* orthodoxy. This is an important point to make in the context of the present discussion as it highlights the fact that the post-war British and American approaches were different from one another in significant respects, and, secondly, that they developed within different, largely (though, as we shall see in 10.3.2 below, not entirely) separate post-war traditions. In the essay referred to above, although Widdowson (1968) does not explicitly identify the ‘common derivation’ which, he believes, underlies contemporary orthodoxy (p. 117), his frequent references to pre-war work by West, Faucett and Palmer (particularly, that of Palmer), and his lack of acknowledgement of post-war American applied linguistics, shows that the former sources, not the latter were seen by him as most influential. Indeed, American influence did not begin to be felt in Britain until the late 1950s (Howatt 1984: 218): among books on ELT published in the UK between World War II and around 1960 (by which time the teacher-training campaign referred to above was well under way in India), very few mention the work of American authorities such as Charles Fries (exceptions in this regard are Frisby (1957) and Gauntlett (1957)). However, to avoid confusion, Tickoo (1964: 176), for one, did find it necessary to indicate explicitly that it was not so much the work of American applied linguists as a different, British tradition — ‘a further refinement on some fundamentals of the approaches adopted by Michael West, Harold Palmer, L. Faucett, A.S. Hornby, and others’ — which undergirded contemporary advocacy of the ‘structural approach’ in India. He indicates, for example, that whereas (American) structural linguistics ‘contributes usefully towards one important aspect of foreign-language teaching, i.e. what to teach’ (pp. 176–77), ‘It has little to offer us as to the “why” and “how” of teaching English’ (p. 176). On the other hand, British orthodoxy ‘is as much pedagogic as

linguistic. [. . .] [A] very distinctive feature [. . .] is its emphasis on meaning. Simplified and graded patterns are therefore associated with situations' (p. 177). At around the same time, in this case from an American perspective, Allen (1965: xi) similarly remarked on US–UK differences as follows:

To a considerable extent American teachers and trainers of teachers have been strongly influenced by structural linguistics to put initial attention upon rigid structural control for the purpose of gaining mastery of both pronunciation and syntax. This is a recent, but apparently increasing, influence. British teachers, on the other hand, despite their having relinquished their longtime emphasis on vocabulary acquisition, still find that their experience leads them to insist that structural control should not be sought initially at the expense of pupil interest in the meaning of the content of what is read or said.

Further insights into the characteristics of the standard British ELT approach are contained in Chapter 4 of the 1961 'Makerere report' (Commonwealth Education Liaison Committee 1961), which is entitled 'The teaching of English to beginners in schools' (pp. 8–14). This contains detailed recommendations, the importance of only some of which Phillipson (1992: 185–215) has highlighted in his list of 'key tenets' representing 'influential beliefs in the ELT profession, which were given a stamp of approval at Makerere and which have had a decisive influence on the nature and content of ELT aid activity in periphery-English countries' (p. 184). Since Phillipson's main concern is with the macro-structures of linguistic imperialism, he does not pay much attention to the methodological discussion in this section of the report, which includes specific recommendations that:

- 'The main emphasis should be on enabling the beginner to speak the language' (p. 8);
- Listening should come before speaking, speaking before reading, and reading before writing (p. 9);
- Special emphasis should be given to pronunciation, the teaching of 'structural patterns', and vocabulary, both of the latter being carefully graded (pp. 9–10);
- Both vocabulary and structures should be taught through demonstration in situations (pp. 12–13).

These principles, I would suggest, have an at least equal claim to being considered 'key tenets' of post-war ELT as those considered by Phillipson (1992), but in the *methodological* realm which he largely ignores.

To summarize the above, by the late 1960s there was a recognition that an 'accepted approach' existed within British ELT which was being widely advocated (Widdowson 1968), and which can be described as 'post-war ELT orthodoxy'. The approach was exported from the late 1950s onwards to India (Prabhu 1987), was 'enshrined' (Phillipson 1992: 184) in the (1961) Makerere report to be further propagated in the Commonwealth, and was still being promoted worldwide via British Council initiatives including the *Teaching Observed* training films in the late 1970s, on the cusp of the communicative 'revolution'. 'S-O-S', as, following Prabhu (1987), I shall term this post-war, pre-communicative orthodoxy, had the following principal characteristics (here I combine the above-cited descriptions of Widdowson (1968) and Prabhu (1987), as confirmed by reference to the 1961 Makerere report and the (1977) filmed lessons from *Teaching Observed* summarized above):

- (i) rejection of 'traditional' procedures of explicit grammar teaching, translation and explication of written texts, and reading aloud and memorization of texts (i.e., *modern*)
- (ii) emphasis on the need for structurally and lexically graded syllabuses (i.e., *structural*);
- (iii) stress on the primacy of speaking among the language skills (although a balanced attention is to be paid to all skills overall) (i.e., *oral*);
- (iv) presentation of new language items through meaningful classroom situations; much controlled practice using techniques such as use of substitution tables and choral repetition, often in meaningful classroom situations (i.e., *situational*).

Thus, post-war ELT orthodoxy was self-consciously *modern*, apart from being *structural*, *oral*, and *situational*. These characteristics were acknowledged in the 1960s (for example by Tickoo (1964), Allen (1965) and Widdowson (1968)) as

having developed independently of contemporary American ideas, and independently, also, of ‘applied linguistics’ as established in the UK (in Edinburgh) for the first time in 1957. How, then, did this post-war orthodoxy come to be promoted, and what were its main sources? These are the questions to be addressed in the following sub-section.

10.2.2 Palmer’s influence on S–O–S

The strands of influence leading from the Tokyo Institute for Research in English Teaching (IRET), and the work of Palmer and A.S. Hornby within IRET, to post-war ELT via Hornby have until now remained inadequately appreciated, for at least two reasons: firstly, the general unavailability of primary source material, including the numerous pre-war IRET publications and, secondly, a lack of secondary accounts in English of IRET activities.²¹ On the basis of my own account of Palmer’s work in Japan in Chapters 7 and 8 of the present thesis it now seems possible to trace these strands of influence more clearly.

The central importance of Hornby’s post-war work has already been recognized (by Howatt 1984: 260–63). However, the way in which the ideas expressed or given concrete form in his publications may, paradoxically, have been largely ‘imported’ to Britain from Japan by Hornby to be further developed by him prior to reincarnation and re-export, through the agency primarily of The British Council, as the *British* ‘S–O–S’ approach to ELT has not yet been adequately emphasized. Below I shall track the post-war establishment of each of the elements of S–O–S methodology identified at the end of the previous section, highlighting the significance of Hornby’s contributions, while indicating the continuity of these contributions with pre-war IRET work as directed by Palmer.

First, though, we need to remind ourselves of what had gone before when ELT was established in Britain (see Chapter 3). Discussions in the emerging UK ‘centre’ from the mid-1930s until the end of World War II had focused quite explicitly and narrowly on needs to propagate English as a world language via simplification of the lexical contents of instruction (in the case of Basic English,

21 Thus, Howatt (1984), while emphasizing both the influence of Palmer (p. 327) and the overall impact of Hornby’s work on post-war British ELT (p. 317), recognizes that relatively little is known about how Palmer’s ideas matured during his time in Japan (p. 236).

especially, but with a consensus emerging among those closer to practice than Ogden and his supporters that vocabulary control should be promoted only as a stepping-stone to 'real English'). Along with Basic, the other main 'systems' considered by the British Council Advisory Committee in the wartime years — West's 'New Method' series, Eckersley's *Essential English* and the Oxford English Course, with Palmer and Hornby's *Thousand-Word English* being increasingly seen as a major rival — were essentially all sets of materials and/or proposals for limited vocabularies. By the end of the 1950s particular materials had been demoted in importance, and the focus had shifted (for example, in India, as discussed above) to teacher training work and the construction of *syllabi* for English learning. Pre-existing vocabulary limitation proposals had become subsumed within S-O-S, which was a comprehensive overall approach with implications not only for the contents of instruction but for all stages of the teaching operation from limitation and grading to classroom presentation and practice.

Already in the wartime years there had been signs of a desire among leading practitioners to move beyond the vocabulary control controversies into consideration of other areas of language teaching. In 1940 Palmer brought out his practical manual for teachers *The Teaching of Oral English* and in his 1942 article in *Oversea Education* (Palmer 1942a) indicated that he felt too much emphasis had been placed on vocabulary and that other areas needed to be investigated. A similar broader focus was exemplified in the books for teachers by Gatenby (1944) and Morris (1945). However, it was only with the end of the war, the establishment of ELT, and the accompanying marginalization of Basic English that the focus could be definitively shifted away from issues of vocabulary control. The advocates of Basic were effectively silenced within the new institutional framework of ELT: the British Council and the major publishers had already made their opposition clear during the war, and Basic was to be hardly mentioned in *English Language Teaching* itself,²² nor promoted by the Institute of Education, UCLES or the BBC in the post-war years. With the support of a consensus (as affirmed, for example, by Bongers (1947) and Morris (1947b)) that problems of vocabulary selection had been largely resolved for teaching purposes by the work of Faucett, Palmer,

22 Except in two articles, by Catford (1950) and Davison (1950), published when its demise had already been assured.

Thorndike and West (1936), the foundation of *English Language Teaching* opened up a new space for the discussion of ideas taking in all stages of the English teaching operation.

However, the particular choices Hornby made in delimiting the boundaries of this new space (as founder-editor of the journal, and the main contributor in its early stages) were highly significant in establishing a particular kind of ‘ethos’ for the new enterprise which was new in the British context, and which was to maintain its salience in the ensuing years. Indeed, the ‘modernity’ of S–O–S — an image which was to be important in facilitating its export to India and elsewhere — can be seen to have its roots primarily in the orientation established early on via *English Language Teaching* by Hornby.

In the first place, it should be noted that Hornby made a deliberate attempt to establish the importance of ‘linguistics’ to English language teaching, taking his title of ‘linguistic adviser’ to the Council quite literally. In the first issue of the new periodical he not only penned (anonymously) an editorial titled ‘Linguistic research’ but also contributed the first of a series of five articles with the title ‘Linguistic pedagogy’. In his editorial, Hornby (1946a: 6) expressed the hope that the new periodical would ‘provide a forum for those engaged in linguistic research in many parts of the world. It will enable the teacher in the classroom to know what has been done and what is being done to help him in his task, and to exchange with fellow-workers his own experiences and findings’.

In accordance with this (practical) linguistic orientation, Hornby was instrumental in establishing a technical, scientific ethos for the overall ELT enterprise which enabled it to be presented as culturally neutral and universal in relevance. For him, as for Palmer before him, both linguistic research and language teaching were primarily technical exercises, associated with ‘[s]cientific inquiry’ (1946a: 6) and having no association with social, political, literary or other ‘humanistic’ considerations. In his editorial for the second issue, ‘Balance and proportion’, Hornby both ingeniously and (as we shall see below) somewhat ingenuously reaffirmed the focus of the new journal on ‘technical’ matters by preempting possible criticisms from those of a more humanistic persuasion:

The suggestion has at times been made that language teaching is becoming too technical. It has been said that language study is becoming dehumanized and mechanical, that the pupil is caused to lose whatever he may have of initiative and that he becomes a mere automaton responding blindly to stimuli applied by his teachers. Oral drills mechanize his spoken work; construction-patterns control and restrict his written work; vocabulary control and text simplification limit his reading matter. In short, the learner is so hedged in that he may, with good reason, protest against so many restrictions on his freedom.

This periodical will contain numerous articles on the technical aspects of language teaching. It may be well, therefore, for us to ask what truth there is in these suggestions and criticisms.

(Hornby 1946b: 31)

Hornby's (ibid.: 32) riposte to these alleged criticisms is that, on the analogy of other arts, 'In the first two phases [of] getting to know and coming to use the language, we need all the help that technicians can give us', in other words, linguistic simplification and repetitive practice are essential. It is only in the third phase of 'getting the *feel* of the language, and applying the information that has been acquired and fixed', the phase connected for Hornby with literature and other higher branches of study, that 'much less in the way of technique' is required of the teacher (ibid.). Thus, Hornby made clear that, in his conception, the main focus of the journal was to be on the teaching of *language* (as opposed to literature), on the *initial phases* of language study (involving 'getting to know and coming to use' the language), and on *technical* aspects.

How, though, could Hornby delimit the scope of *English Language Teaching* so confidently in this manner from the very first two issues, and thus establish an enduring 'modernist' ethos for ELT, despite the newness in the UK context of the whole enterprise? The answer cannot be found in contemporary or previous developments in the UK, and must be sought, instead, in the way he derived sustenance from work carried out previously in Japan. Not only was Hornby's decision to found the journal itself a direct outcome of his work as editor of the IRET *Bulletin* (see Appendix 8.1) but the stance he adopted — and his own contributions to the journal — also fitted in seamlessly with this pre-war work. This is shown clearly in the case of the 'Balance and proportion' editorial considered above, which was in fact an almost word-for-word copy of an editorial Hornby had written ten years earlier, soon after taking over the editorship of the *Bulletin*

(Hornby 1936b). Thus, whereas in this 1936 version Hornby was responding to actual criticisms of IRET's neglect of literature by traditionally minded Japanese teachers, the 1946 *English Language Teaching* version served to pre-empt such criticisms, in other words to *establish* the 'modern' linguistic and technical IRET ethos at the heart of UK-based ELT. As we shall see, the 'oral drills' and 'construction-patterns' he mentions in the editorial had been familiar within IRET but had *not yet* been established as characteristic of British ELT.

As 'linguistic adviser' to the British Council (the same title, it should be noted, that Palmer had given himself in Japan), Hornby essentially propagated Palmer's emphasis on the importance of 'linguistic research' as a basis for 'linguistic pedagogy' (again, Palmer's term). The kind of research envisaged was of the sort carried out within IRET, rather, that is, than any contemporary background linguistic research in the UK context (for example, that of Firth at SOAS), and still less contemporary 'applied linguistic' developments in the USA, which appear to have been unknown in the UK at this stage. Thus, in the first of his (1946–47a) 'Linguistic Pedagogy' articles, Hornby conveyed, with acknowledgement and no change, Palmer's (e.g. 1938b) views on the relevance of Saussure. In the same first issue of the journal he also began a parallel series on 'Sentence patterns and substitution tables' which served (in this case with no acknowledgment of provenance) to introduce work on the teaching of construction-patterns which had, similarly, been initiated by Palmer in Japan.

This brings us to the specific 'structural' focus of post-war ELT orthodoxy, the first component of 'S–O–S' methodology as identified in 10.2.1 above. With vocabulary selection largely 'out of the way' as a controversial issue, the post-war path was clear for a definitive shift in linguistic focus within ELT away from lexis and towards syntax. As Jeffery (1953: vi) wrote in his Foreword to West's (1953) *General Service List*, this publication marked a fitting culmination to a period during which lexis had been at the fore, and he also noted that 'structural problems' were by then becoming the new focus of concern. However, the only British institution engaged at this time in any kind of EFL-related 'research' (as promoted by Hornby) was the Institute of Education, and the work carried on there was largely tied to particular projects. The 'structural syllabi' being developed at the Institute were frequently mentioned during the 1950s and subsequently, but the

ideas which undergirded this work appear never to have been published independently of the courses the syllabi were actually prepared for (initially, the BBC's *Listen and Speak* series, written by Elliott, Mackey and Noonan (1951–53) under the supervision of Pattison). Later, in India, former students of the Institute (who had come to study in London in increasing numbers during the 1950s) drew on Institute experience in developing particular state syllabi. As Patel (1958) remarked, this work was not contrastive as in the case of parallel work on structures in the USA, indeed little reference appears to have been made to the findings of American applied linguists like Fries. Hornby's publications, then, constituted the real 'engine room' of the work on structures in post-war British ELT, although the Institute of Education (with British Council support) appears to have been instrumental in spreading actual examples of structural syllabi to countries like India from the 1950s onwards.

How had the new focus on structures, and on structural syllabi emerged in the post-war years in Britain? Partly, it could be seen to have developed 'naturally' out of the previous work on vocabulary control. This seems to have occurred in the case of W. Stannard Allen, for example, who claimed in the Introduction to his (1947) *Living English Structure* that many of the exercises in his book 'are based on the results of personal "structure-counts" — in imitation of "word-counts" — carried out while listening to the speech of educated English people over considerable periods' (pp. vii–viii). However, without the pre-war contributions of Palmer, and Hornby's early efforts to 'imprint' ELT with Palmer's legacy, it is doubtful that there would have been such a focus in post-war British ELT on structural concerns.

'Construction-patterns' and 'sentence patterns' had both been alluded to by Palmer in his (1938) *Grammar of English Words*. And in his (1942a) article in *Oversea Education* he had written as follows:

Sweet and Jespersen urged a total reform of all existing grammatical systems and terminology, and in fact carried their ideas into effect by composing and publishing 'new' grammars [. . .]. My own contribution was a type of grammar based on substitution tables and construction-patterns, and I have the conviction that 'Pattern Grammar' (or Gestaltgrammatik) will prove to be the most practical form of grammar for the purpose of teaching foreign languages.

However, apart from the suggestions contained in *A Grammar of English Words*, no systematic descriptions of English in terms of construction- or sentence-patterns had yet appeared in the UK. Thus, although in the 1936b/1946b 'Balance and proportion' editorial already referred to above, Hornby refers to the way some might feel 'construction-patterns control and restrict [the student's] written work', the idea of construction-patterns had only been discussed extensively within the IRET context, and the idea was still to a large extent *new* in the UK in 1946. As we have seen, this editorial was an attempt by Hornby to *establish* the IRET ethos in post-war ELT, and his series of (1946–47b) articles on 'Sentence patterns and substitution tables' in the first volume of the journal represented his first attempt to introduce actual IRET work, with a similar lack of acknowledgment that this was the case. In the first article of the series, Hornby presented the idea of a 'sentence pattern' as being 'a formula showing the units which make up a sentence' (p. 17). He also provided numerous examples of substitution tables (based on Palmer's earlier distinction between complex and simple tables), presenting these as valuable tools for showing beginners the structure of sentences, and for engaging them in practice. In the subsequent three articles in the series, he provided more detailed notes on what he termed the 'most frequently occurring sentence patterns in English' (p. 23).

Of course, Hornby was both justifiably proud of his own achievement in developing Palmer's ideas on construction-patterns and, in other places, keen to acknowledge his debt to Palmer. With the (1948) reissue of Hornby, Gatenby and Wakefield's dictionary, itself a major pre-war IRET achievement, sentence patterns became established for the first time in an important UK-published reference work for English language teaching, with twenty-five different 'verb patterns' being identified in Hornby's Introduction (pp. xi–xxiv). This was the first major example of Hornby's pre-war Japan work 'coming on tap' to fulfill the promise of his *English Language Teaching* editorials and articles up to that point, and in the 'General Editor's Note' to the 1948 reissue, he acknowledged Palmer's contribution fully (p. [iii]).

A Guide to Sentence Patterns and Usage in English (1954) was Hornby's second major work of reference, and this, alongside the (1948) dictionary and West's (1953) *General Service List*, established ELT as a serious pursuit on a substantial practical linguistic foundation. As in the earlier dictionary, Hornby showed originality in the classification of sentence patterns for this book, and he additionally developed a new way of presenting tenses and modal verbs according to underlying 'concepts' ('repeated or habitual activities', 'plans and arrangements', 'permission', and so on), showing a concern with meaning not evident in Fries's (1952) *The Structure of English: An Introduction to the Construction of English Sentences*. Indeed, Hornby's book was written much more with reference to the European grammarians — Jespersen (especially), Poutsma, Kruisinga and Zandvoort — than to contemporary American structural linguistics. However, Hornby's major and fully acknowledged debt was to the 'inspiring leadership', 'initiative' and 'enthusiasm' of Palmer at IRET (Hornby 1954: viii).

It can be argued, then, that the post-war ELT focus on structures was neither mainly influenced by American work nor by contemporary or previous research in the UK context, but rather by pedagogically motivated pre-war IRET research work initiated by Palmer and subsequently extended by Hornby.

Aside from its 'structural' emphasis, another distinctive characteristic of S-O-S methodology was its stress on the need to present and practise new language with no initial reference to written forms. Although reading and writing were not thereby excluded, the acceptance of a fundamentally 'oral approach' in the early stages of language-study represented a significant shift away from 'reading-first' ideas such as those expressed by Michael West in the pre-war period, and a decisive victory for Palmer's Japan-based arguments for the 'primacy of speech' even when the ultimate goals were reading and writing. Reasons for and influences on this post-war shift are harder to discern than in the case of the new 'structural' focus discussed above, and may have related as much to the consolidation of a general consensus in favour of 'Direct Method' teaching in the immediate post-war years as to the specific contributions of Hornby (who did, however, advocate oral procedures strongly, for example in his seminal 'Linguistic pedagogy' (1946–47a), 'Sentence patterns and substitution tables' (1946–47b) and 'Situational approach' (1950b) articles).

Thus, it is important in this area to recognize that by the time ELT was 'established' all the leading materials writers had already begun to admit the claims of the spoken language (or, more properly, what Abercrombie (1963) was to call 'spoken prose') — including West, who had himself tempered his initial exclusive focus on reading with materials such as the (1933b) *New Method Conversation Course* and via his support of Palmer's own contributions to the 'New Method' series. Wartime needs within the UK may have played a part here, with the teaching of allied servicemen and refugees having motivated the production of several books (as I have indicated above). The development both of BBC 'English by Radio' programmes and of gramophone courses may also have had a role in bringing about a new recognition of needs for spoken English. At the Institute of Education, the influence of Direct Method ideas was already strong, due to the pre-war influence of Faucett, although Gurrey and Pattison themselves came to their positions of influence with specialisms in historical linguistics and literature, respectively. The circulation of Direct Method ideas in the Empire since the days of Wren and Wyatt (see Appendix 6) should also be taken into account and deserves to be further researched. Certainly, the teaching manuals written in the 1940s and 1950s by figures (previously) involved in colonial education — Morris (1945, 1954), French (1948–50) and Frisby (1957) — consistently advocated Direct Method teaching rather than West's 'reading-first approach', and tended to show a good awareness of Palmer's pre-war contributions. Finally, phoneticians were the only university-based linguists to contribute to *English Language Teaching* during the late 1940s and 1950s, reflecting the practical orientation which Jones had established (following on from Sweet and Passy) at UCL.²³ The 'primacy of speech', then, seems to have been a generally accepted principle among those centrally concerned with EFL in the UK after the war ended, independently of the contemporaneous advocacy of an 'oral approach' by Charles Fries and other linguists in the USA (see below, however, on the pre-war contacts between Palmer and Bloomfield).

23 However, it should be noted that 'linguistics', as opposed to philology or phonetics, had not yet been established in British universities to the same extent as in the USA. J.R. Firth (1890–1960) was the first to establish the subject fully, as Professor of General Linguistics at SOAS (from 1944 until 1956) (Love 1988). Palmer had, it seems, been twenty-five years ahead of his time in purporting to teach 'linguistics' at SOS in the period 1918–22 (see 6.6 above).

Palmer had contributed much to the establishment of the British 'oral approach', partly via his most practically oriented UK-published manuals for teachers *The Oral Method of Teaching Languages* (1921b) and *The Oral Teaching of English* (1940h), whose titles themselves signalled the primacy he gave to speech-work. The forms of activity introduced in these publications rapidly became staples of post-war ELT. Hornby's particular contributions in this area included the provision of ideas for treating reading texts orally (in his last two 'Linguistic Pedagogy' articles, adapted from earlier *Bulletin* articles (in particular, Hornby 1936–37), in which he introduced ideas developed within IRET for oral introduction, question and answer following text reading, and so on). Hornby also contributed by suggesting concretely how grammar could be taught orally, using substitution tables and associated drills, and on the basis of classroom situations, as we shall now see.

The 'situational' aspect of S–O–S methodology was the most distinctive aspect of British as opposed to American post-war orthodoxy. Later, it was to be related by some to Firthian approaches to linguistic analysis (the notion of 'context of situation'), and, perhaps largely due to the arrival of English by television series like *Walter and Connie*, first broadcast in 1962 (Tomalin and Quinault 1992), and the 'situational dialogues' which began to enter some textbooks in the 1960s and 1970s, these days a 'situational approach' is largely associated with the introduction into the classroom via materials and make-believe of 'real-life' situations such as 'at the post office', 'at the hotel reception desk', and so on.

However, as we have seen (in section 10.2.1 above), within S–O–S methodology, the notion of 'situation' referred to presentation and practice of new language items in relation to meaningful *classroom* situations, with pictures, objects and actions serving to maintain a focus on the meaning of what is being presented and practised. 'Situation' in this meaning had a long pedigree within Direct Method language teaching, particularly the strand represented by Sauveur, Heness and Berlitz (see Chapter 2), but it was Hornby who first coined the term 'situational approach', in a (1950b) series of three *English Language Teaching* articles published just after Palmer's death. Hornby's original contribution in these articles was to begin to match the particular sentence patterns and 'structural words' he had begun to identify in the work discussed above to particular suggested procedures of

ostensive presentation and practice. At the end of the 1950s, Hornby further 'codified' the situational aspect of S-O-S methodology in a series of manuals for teachers, *The Teaching of Structural Words and Sentence Patterns* (1959–66), which provided detailed guidance on how to teach different aspects of grammar in classroom situations. In this manner, Hornby matched classroom situations to particular sentence patterns and 'structural words' in an original fashion, more systematically than Palmer, who, in his early Japan work, at least, had preferred to keep in play 'multiple lines of approach', with the 'grammar line of approach' and the 'ostensive line of approach' both being offered to teachers to combine as they would like, without coordination, or 'spoon-feeding', from teaching manuals.

Nevertheless, Hornby did derive the basic idea of ostensive presentation and practice from Palmer, who had himself previously systematized Direct Method procedures derived in turn mainly from Berlitz and Gouin. Indeed, in Palmer's last manual for teachers, *The Oral Teaching of English* (1940h), he had explained (on p. 10) that:

The subject is here presented not from the point of view of traditional grammar and lexicology, but from the point of view of practical teaching. The various grammatical categories are replaced by "language situations". Instead of talking about nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc. we talk about the naming and describing of objects and actions.

The 'situational' aspect of S-O-S, then, was derived originally from Palmer's 'ostensive' line of approach, as presented especially in *English through Actions* (Palmer and Palmer, D. 1925c). Hornby did not acknowledge Palmer's inspiration in this area as clearly as in other domains. In the series of three articles (Hornby 1950b) which established the 'situational approach' in name, Hornby did not even mention Palmer, although he did refer to Gouin as inspiration for the 'action chains' mentioned there. However, the original derivation of 'situational language teaching' from Palmer and ideas commonplace within IRET can be shown clearly if Hornby's series of (1946–47a) articles on 'Linguistic methodology' are compared with the series 'Lessons in Technique' which he had written previously for the IRET *Bulletin* (Hornby 1936–37). In introducing the *Bulletin* series, in the first article Hornby had stated that 'First-year work will not be treated here, for ostensive procedures are by now well understood in this country [i.e. Japan]. (And

in any case they are fully demonstrated in such books as [Palmer's] *English Through Actions* [. . .]). However, he could assume much less knowledge on the part of the reader of *English Language Teaching* in the area of initial ostensive procedures, and so summarized Palmer's ideas on ostensive and contextual teaching in parts 2 and 3 of the 'Linguistic methodology' series (parts 4 and 5, as I have explained above, were summaries of articles previously written). In the post-war ELT context, these ideas for 'classroom situation-based' teaching, so familiar to readers of the *Bulletin* in Japan, must have appeared quite new, and were rapidly adopted as standard practice.

Returning to the overall IRET-based, 'modernist' consensus which had been largely established by Hornby via his early articles in *English Language Teaching*, one of the few dissenting voices was that of Arthur King (1949a, b). If his articles are anything to go by, then already by 1949 Hornby had largely succeeded in establishing the dominance in practice of a utilitarian, 'technical' ethos for ELT (not only pre-emptively, as in the (1946b) 'Balance and Proportion' editorial). Thus, King acknowledged in his articles that he was swimming against the tide in entering a plea for the reinstatement of literature, and for a less mechanical, skills-based, accuracy focused view of language teaching, and in arguing instead for an approach more focused on cultural and moral ends, on intelligibility, fluency and even the tolerance of what would be called today 'world Englishes'.²⁴

The 'Hornbyan ethos' came to prevail even more strongly later on because it chimed so well with the overall shift away from British Council cultural propaganda via its own Institutes and towards ELT as 'development aid' (with a focus on teacher-training for the former colonies) which has been charted by Phillipson (1992) and referred to by Pennycook (1994). Thus, in 1957, Firth, reporting to the British Council on a trip to India and Pakistan,

24 For example: 'less concentration on accuracy and more concentration on the culture of the country concerned will increase the eagerness of the pupil in learning a language' (King 1949a: 5); 'we should teach languages more as means to ends and less as ends in themselves; [. . .] we should teach the ends to which they are means; and [. . .] we should find time for such teaching by making our language-teaching functional, taking as our criterion not so much correctness as comprehensibility' (1949a: 11); 'the English-language teacher should regard himself less as the perfecter of a skill, and more as a cicerone to the cultures of the English-speaking countries' (1949b: 29); 'the moral task of the teacher of a foreign language is the same as that of the teacher of the mother tongue' (1949b: 31); 'If your pupil's English is comprehensible, why change it? If you or he can communicate something new by giving 'standard' English a twist, why should you not? That is what has vitalized English in the past' (1949b: 36).

underlined the central problem there, that of freeing English studies from their old literary trammels in order to provide scientific and technical workers with a clear and efficient type of English suited to their needs. The Indians and Pakistanis themselves were of the opinion that they could look after literary studies, but they did need help with the English language, which would have to be their medium for both teaching and research for many years to come.²⁵

In 1960, at the beginning of a new era of 'intense cultivation of ELT' (Phillipson 1992: 113), Pattison reported somewhat regretfully that 'Literature had tended to be pushed into the background in recent years by the rapid development of language teaching'.²⁶ The clearest (and most paradoxical) sign of this was the transformation in the views of Arthur King (author of the 1949 articles referred to above), who between 1959 and 1969 exerted considerable influence as the Controller of the Education Division of the British Council (Donaldson 1984: 273):

Largely through him, the old system of the British Council Institute and the direct teaching of English as a preliminary to knowledge of the British culture and people fell out of favour [. . .]. [H]e believed, as one of his colleagues put it, that 'it was a mistake to carry the luggage of literature' into the sphere of language teaching. He recognised correctly that not everybody wants to learn literature and that it is not necessarily the best methodological approach to what has become known as English for Special Purposes (ESP).

(Donaldson 1984: 218)

King presided over the closure of '[d]ozens of small Institutes and Council-subsidised Anglophile Societies' in Europe and the Middle East to make way for 'multiplier systems' with a focus on teacher training, the preparation of materials and curricula, and cooperation with universities (Donaldson 1984: 273). Thus, paradoxically, King was the man most responsible for the British Council's shift away from literature and 'cultural propaganda' and *to* language in the 1960s, in a

25 Minutes, Linguistics Panel of English Studies Advisory Committee, 9 December 1957, BW 138/1, in Public Records Office, Kew.

26 Minutes, English Studies Advisory Committee, 9 November 1960, BW 138/1, in Public Records Office, Kew.

conscious espousal of the kind of 'modern', technical approach to which he had objected so strongly in his 1949 articles for *English Language Teaching*.

Palmer's influence on post-war ELT may be summarized overall as follows. He made a major contribution to the compilation of the (1936) *Interim Report*, the bed-rock in terms of vocabulary control of post-war ELT orthodoxy. The alternatives to Basic English which he presented in this report and (with Hornby) in *Thousand-Word English* came to serve as important reference points in the debate over Basic English out of which a new appreciation emerged in the UK of the importance of teaching English as a foreign language. In the post-war 'settlement', it was his ideas rather than those of, say, Michael West, which became dominant. This was largely due to the way Hornby was appointed as 'linguistic adviser' to the British Council, a title which itself referred back to pre-war IRET experience. Thus, Hornby was enabled to attain a position of influence in the UK which Palmer had enjoyed in Japan but never in the UK. Once this happened, the way was clear also for the introduction of a wider range of the work done in Japan, reflecting Palmer's broader interests (as pleaded for in his 1942a article). The influence Hornby and, to some extent, Gatenby were able to exert seems to have been largely due to the way their engagement with the Tokyo Institute for Research in English Teaching had prepared them for assuming leadership roles. The journal established by Hornby was based on the IRET *Bulletin*, and it promoted a 'linguistic', technical basis for ELT in a very similar fashion to the *Bulletin*, transferring the ethos developed by Palmer within IRET to post-war ELT. The structural 'linguistic basis' of ELT was derived out of work done in Japan under Palmer's direction, rather than from established UK linguists.

As Hornby (1968) was to acknowledge very explicitly, the basis of the methodology which became dominant in the post-war years (termed above 'S-O-S') owed its essentials to Palmer's ideas. This is not to underestimate Hornby's own individual achievement in extending IRET work in the particular directions represented by S-O-S, but (as we shall see in the following section) it did represent a 'narrow' interpretation which highlighted only certain strands of Palmer's work. The work which Hornby brought on tap after 1946, and for which he is chiefly remembered, represented 'the application of the work that has been done', as

predicted in 1936 in Japan, on Palmer's departure (Hornby 1936a: 5), and may be listed as follows:

- a 'new-type dictionary' (ibid.: 4) (*A Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, Hornby, Gatenby and Wakefield 1948));
- an investigation of which construction patterns are of greatest utility and importance to beginners, co-ordination of this with work on new-type grammar, and presentation of the results for classroom use (Hornby 1936a: 5), best realized in *A Guide to Sentence Patterns and Usage* (Hornby 1954) and 'The Hornby Course' (Hornby 1954–56); and
- 'the preparation of further handbooks for the use and guidance of teachers who are anxious to teach English "as Speech"' (Hornby 1936a: 5), achieved by means of *The Teaching of Structural Words and Sentence Patterns* (Hornby 1959–66)).

With his post-war work in the UK Hornby ultimately succeeded in fully achieving the applications to classroom work envisaged in the programme he set himself on taking over direction of research for IRET. Hornby's contributions were particularly influential because carefully worked out, founded on pre-war work and yet innovative in the post-war ELT context. He 'applied' work that had been done within IRET, according to the directions established by Palmer, and thus mediated Palmer's achievements in the post-war 'settlement'. Palmer's influence on post-war ELT orthodoxy was therefore diffuse and indirect, not tied to particular writings of his, but nevertheless pervasive.

10.3 Palmer's legacy: A broader analysis

In the analysis above, I have highlighted how British post-war orthodoxy in ELT was derived from Palmer's work, as mediated via Hornby's interpretation and extension of IRET activities in Japan, and have thus established a continuity with pre-war work which has been insufficiently acknowledged in previous accounts (or attributed in a one-sided way to colonial influences, for example by Phillipson

(1992) and Pennycook (1994)). In this final section I view Palmer's contributions in a wider temporal perspective, offering more speculative interpretations which relate in other ways to the theme of continuity through time. First (in 10.3.1) I highlight the way Palmer's career can be seen to have functioned overall as a bridge between late nineteenth-century innovations in modern language teaching and post-World War II ELT, and I then indicate how this inheritance from the nineteenth century via Palmer continues to inform present-day ELT practice, notwithstanding the communicative 'revolution' of the mid-1970s. I then (in 10.3.2) present indications and explanations of ways in which Palmer's work has hitherto tended to be neglected and misunderstood, associating this with the rise of applied linguistics in the post-war era.

10.3.1 Palmer's wider role and influence

Palmer had a significant influence on post-war ELT orthodoxy via Hornby, but it is important to recognize also, as I have suggested in Chapter 2 and at different points in my account of his career, that he himself owed a considerable debt to predecessors including Gouin, Berlitz, Prendergast, Sweet, Passy, and Jespersen. In this sense, post-war ELT was rooted not just in Palmer's individual contributions but, via his work in particular, in late nineteenth-century innovation and Reform. From this broad historical perspective, recognition needs to be awarded to the unique and important role Palmer played as a mediator between earlier, generic ideas for modern language teaching (the 'Direct Method', in all its forms) and the particular ideas which came to characterize post-war ELT orthodoxy.

In performing this mediating role, Palmer showed considerable independence of mind in fusing ideas from the tradition of utilitarian language teaching for adults (see 2.1) with the overall 'applied linguistic' approach of the school-focused Reform Movement (see 2.2). Previously, as I have indicated in Chapter 2, the ideas of innovators in the former tradition had not been coordinated with one another and had been largely dismissed as 'pre-scientific' by Reform Movement theorists (see, for example, Jespersen 1901/1904: 3). However, Palmer's own background had been in language teaching for adults rather than in school teaching, and this experience led him to value highly and further develop, throughout his career, techniques of oral presentation and practice through question

and answer which he associated with Berlitz, ‘ostensive’ procedures making reference to pictures, objects and actions which he derived from both Berlitz and Gouin, and sentence imitation and substitution drill procedures which are likely to have been influenced by Prendergast. Palmer’s chief contribution within the utilitarian language teaching tradition was the way he synthesized, systematized and further developed a wide variety of practical techniques in publications including *The Oral Method of Teaching Languages* (1921b) and *English through Actions* (1925c), and at the same time provided them with ‘scientific’ respectability via publications including *The Scientific Study* (1917b), *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921a) and the *Memorandum* (1924a). It was only with his work in Japan that Palmer really began to engage in the reform of ‘traditional’ school-based teaching, and only there, and as a consequence of this engagement, that he began to loosen his attachment to the ‘purely’ oral, largely text-independent methods he had developed up to that point.

Thus, although Palmer clearly came to see himself as an inheritor of the Reform Movement tradition, making increasingly frequent reference in the latter part of his career to predecessors such as Viëtor, Sweet and Jespersen (e.g. Palmer 1942a, 1944c), the ‘Oral Method’ with which he continued to be most associated was rooted more firmly in experiences of adult education than in school teaching, and could be characterized as closer overall to the Berlitz and, to a lesser extent, Gouin forms of Direct Method (see 2.3) than to the text-centred form associated with the Continental reformers. In this respect, Palmer made his general allegiances clear in the introduction to *English through Actions*, where he stated that ‘Upon the whole, the Direct Method treatment adopted [in this book] is inspired by the Berlitz interpretation’ (Palmer and Palmer, D. 1925c: iv). Indeed, his next sentence in the same introduction makes quite clear that the roots of the ‘oral’ and ‘situational’ components of post-war S–O–S methodology lay firmly in this particular Direct Method tradition, as mediated by Palmer and, later, Hornby:

Berlitz insists in a greater degree than any other interpreter of the Direct Method on the continual activity of teacher and pupils, and the exemplification of new words and constructions by reference to conditions actually present in the classroom.

(ibid.)

Even the ‘structural’ dimension of S–O–S can be seen to have derived originally as much from the late nineteenth-century utilitarian tradition of language learning methods for adults (in this case represented by Prendergast) as from the Reform Movement, although Jespersen’s descriptive work on English syntax in the early twentieth century was to provide an important secondary source of inspiration for Hornby. Thus, Palmer came to recognize explicitly and without apology that in advocating (to start with, in his three 1916 publications) the thorough mechanizing of isolated ‘type sentences’ he was contravening one of the major Reform principles, whereby ‘the use of disconnected sentences is replaced by the use of connected texts’ (Palmer and Palmer, D. 1925c: ii). The way Palmer invented substitution tables and associated drills, ‘ergonic’ descriptions, and, ultimately, taxonomies of construction patterns on the basis of the ‘substitution principle’ which he seems to have derived originally from Prendergast must go down as one of his most significant, because ultimately most influential contributions. Overall, his open-mindedness to a wide variety of sources of inspiration within a broadly ‘Direct Method’ orientation had led him to welcome, weld together and extend — initially, via experimentation in his own ‘Institute’ in Verviers — the practical ideas of innovators like Berlitz, Gouin and Prendergast in a manner which, as we have seen, was strongly to colour post-war ELT orthodoxy in the form of the Structural-Oral-Situational approach. The extent to which this debt to ideas for adult language teaching was appropriate or inappropriate in school settings is a topic I shall consider in my concluding discussion (Chapter 11) below.

In other, perhaps less clearly concrete ways, however, the Reform Movement did exert a strong influence on Palmer and, through him and Hornby, post-war ELT. As he became more familiar with the ideas and overall approach of Reform Movement theorists — via his early reading, his membership of the IPA and subsequent association with Daniel Jones, and more bruising encounters with the progressive modern language teaching establishment in the UK (namely, Rippmann and Kirkman: see Chapter 6) — Palmer adopted an increasingly broad view of the language teaching operation, widening his concerns to take account of needs not only to systematize teaching procedures but also to root his ideas in language learning theory and to specify better the contents of instruction via

linguistic description, selection and grading. Palmer's own characteristic tendency to resist extremism and maintain a broad, eclectic focus seems to have gained considerable sustenance from the balanced scholarly approach he encountered in the work of Bréal (1893), Passy (1899), Sweet (1899), and Jespersen (1901/1904), although, probably due to a (partly justified) belief in the novelty of his own contributions, he did not tend to acknowledge them directly. Thus, in tempering the pretensions to completeness of Prendergast, Berlitz and Gouin by welding together and systematizing their ideas while taking off their more extremist 'rough edges' (Berlitz's monolingualism, and the 'single principle' nature of the Prendergast and Gouin systems), Palmer showed not only open-mindedness and originality (as I have indicated above) but a scepticism regarding 'patent methods' which matched that of the nineteenth-century Reformers.²⁷ The overall concern of these writers to place language teaching on a principled, 'scientific' (or, as we would say nowadays, 'applied linguistic') footing was reflected throughout Palmer's work, not least in the area of specifying the contents of instruction. While embracing (and, indeed, extending into the area of intonation) the primary concern of his Reform Movement predecessors with phonetic description and training, Palmer introduced at different points of his career new emphases on the identification for pedagogic purposes of relevant vocabulary, collocations, sentence patterns and even (for example, in *Everyday Sentences in Spoken English* (1922b) and *Conversational English* (1925b)) 'notions' and 'functions' of English. To take just Palmer's work on vocabulary as an example, it is clear that, while Sweet had, before him, stressed the need for vocabulary limitation (e.g. Sweet 1884: 587; 1899: 174–75) and had put this principle into practice, for example in the texts within his own (1885) *Elementarbuch des gesprochenen Englisch*, Palmer took the idea further and identified a whole range of criteria both for identifying and classifying lexicological units (e.g. Palmer 1917b: 32–46) and for determining their inclusion or otherwise in a course of study (e.g. 1917b: 122–31). This ground-breaking work was both rigorous and rooted throughout in pedagogical priorities. Guided by a general concern with principled course design (Palmer 1921a: 113–47) which was itself one

27 Thus, Sweet (1899: 3) on Gouin: 'Gouin's "series-method" may in itself be a sound principle, but it is too limited in its applications to form even the basis of a fully developed method. A good method must, before all, be comprehensive and eclectic'. Compare, also, Passy's (1899) implicit arguments against Berlitz monolingualism, partially summarized in 2.3 above.

of his most long-lasting contributions to ELT, he combined a linguistic and a practice-oriented perspective in the word-lists he actually worked out within IRET and for the Carnegie Conference in the 1930s. As we turn now to considerations of ways in which Palmer's work may have influenced ELT beyond S–O–S methodology and up until the present day, the way he propagated and enhanced the Reform Movement 'paradigm' will come to appear even more salient.

Despite the various changes in methodological emphasis within ELT in the last forty or so years, there have been certain constant 'tenets' which have largely maintained their hold and which can be traced back to Palmer's mediation of the late nineteenth-century inheritance. From this (usually neglected) broad historical perspective, the communicative 'revolution' of the mid-1970s can be seen to have been less of a paradigm shift than is usually assumed, and Palmer's influence can be viewed as having extended much further forward even than I have indicated in 10.2 above.

Certainly, it needs to be recognized at the outset that some of Palmer's particular emphases regarding the nature of language and language learning now appear limited, indeed, to advocates of the communicative approach, misguided: for example, his relative neglect of 'rules of language use', and his emphasis on the supreme importance of accuracy and the formation of good language learning 'habits' in the early stages of language learning. Partly in response to background developments in linguistics and second language acquisition theory, communicative language teaching (CLT) has introduced new contents of instruction (for example, notions, functions, topic areas), a greater tolerance of error, and a wider variety of activity types relating to the belief that 'language is acquired through communication' (Howatt 1984: 279). On the basis of new psycholinguistic insights and an overall concern to simulate 'real' language use in the classroom, skills training has also gained in prominence. On the other hand, the 'weak version' of CLT which has been most widely spread (see Howatt 1984: 279) can be interpreted as having added to S–O–S methodology without fully replacing it. In the 'P–P–P' (Presentation–Practice–Production) model of lesson planning which is characteristic of this 'weak version', a relatively free production phase is added on to oral and situational presentation and controlled practice stages which still tend to owe much to S–O–S procedures (the Trainer's Handbook to one teacher training manual which

was quite widely used in the 1990s, *Teach English* (Doff 1988), notes, for example, that ‘substitution practice and presenting a structure through a situation [. . .] are still in widespread use’ (p. 9), while a more recent manual, *Success in English Teaching* (Davies, with Pearce 2000) recognizes that ‘Repetition practice is used in most Communicative Language Teaching, but it is normally of the Situational Language Teaching type — situationally contextualized and meaningful’ (p. 194)). Similarly, in the area of mainstream syllabus and materials design, specifications of functions, notions, topics and sub-skills are combined with, but do not typically replace more traditional phonological, lexical, structural and situational strands. Indeed, following the initial enthusiasm for purely notional/functional materials in the mid-1970s, there has been both a ‘reversion’ to structural grading as a guiding syllabus design principle and a revival of interest in lexis which brings matters full circle to Palmer’s own original concerns (as described above).

Rather than in the area of particular procedures or contents of instruction, however, it is in the overall emphases of Palmer’s approach to language teaching that his most enduring influence is to be found, and in which we can identify most clearly the Reform Movement legacy to ELT. Regardless of ‘surface’ changes in methodological fashion over the last forty or so years, three of the four major Reform Movement principles have continued to hold sway over mainstream ELT, namely (1) a theoretical and practical emphasis on the ‘primacy of speech’, (2) discouragement of translation and other uses of the mother tongue, and (3) a preference for inductive learning over explicit, deductive grammar teaching. The particular emphasis on principled course design (involving selection and grading according to various linguistic and pedagogical criteria) which can, perhaps, be seen as Palmer’s major original contribution within the Reform Movement tradition has also maintained its salience, as has the tendency he inherited from the Reform Movement and further propagated of referring to contemporary linguistic and language learning theory in justification of language teaching ideas. The ways in which Palmer, in all these domains, mediated the Reform Movement’s ‘applied linguistic’ approach, with long-lasting effects, will continue to be a theme for discussion in the following section, and in my conclusion (Chapter 11).

10.3.2 The neglect of Palmer, and his ‘unclaimed inheritance’

Ironically, as I shall explain, it was the rise of applied linguistics in the post-World War II era which most put paid to any lasting recognition of Palmer’s achievements. Despite the definite influence he can be seen to have had on the specific form of post-war ELT orthodoxy (and, as we have begun to discern above, the broader influence he seems to have had in mediating the Reform Movement legacy to present-day ELT), Palmer has only rarely been referred to as a source of insight in the post-war era (see Chapter 1). Rather than looking back and seeing themselves as operating within a continuous tradition, ELT professionals have tended, especially since the 1960s, to view themselves as being in the vanguard of innovation, and it is primarily to the rise of applied linguistics that we need to look for explanations of this ahistorical, progressivist inclination.

As I have already noted, the term ‘applied linguistics’ first appeared in the sub-title of the Michigan-based journal *Language Learning*, whose founder and first editor Charles C. Fries was also chiefly responsible for propagating the American version of the ‘oral’ or ‘structural’ approach to EFL (e.g. Fries 1945, 1960/1965). To a much greater extent even than Hornby (see 10.2.2 above), Fries claimed that his approach was founded on scientific linguistic procedures, principally in the area of syllabus and materials design. Indeed, initially at least, contrastive linguistic descriptions of English as compared with various languages did govern the design of materials associated with Fries’s Oral Approach.²⁸ Later, appeals to the dominant psychological theory of behaviourism were added in justification of the various ‘pattern practice’ procedures associated with the approach (see Lado 1964: 51, 55), and the promotion of ‘language laboratories’ further consolidated the modern, scientific image of what by the 1960s was being called the ‘audiolingual method’. Identifying themselves as wholly innovative in being grounded in up-to-date background theory, advocates of audiolingualism and the associated pursuit of ‘applied linguistics’ set no store by previous, supposedly ‘pre-scientific’ experience

28 Diller (1971: 18), himself no fan of the structural linguists’ pretensions, comments caustically as follows: ‘Fries and his associates [. . .] worked out materials in English as a foreign language for Latin American students (Lado and Fries 1958 is a revision of materials written in the early 1940’s). Then they started over again for speakers of Chinese (Fries and Shen, 1946). Apparently, however, they did not think it worthwhile to develop special sets of curriculum [*sic*] for speakers of other languages. And the course for Latin American students was revised in 1958 to be used by foreigners of all backgrounds’.

as a potential source of insight (one is reminded here of the Reform Movement theorists' attitude to earlier innovators). The situation in this regard was only slightly better in the UK at the University of Edinburgh, where the first British base for applied linguistics was established in 1957, and where Ronald Mackin, seconded by the British Council, did maintain an interest in history which was later to inspire Howatt's own research in the area (Howatt 1984: x).

As we have seen, during the 1960s the dominance of applied linguistics over other discourse around the world increased to such a point that writers including Tickoo (1964) found it necessary to indicate explicitly that the structural approach (i.e., S-O-S) in India owed more to pre-war experience and practical Institute of Education / British Council expertise than to American structural linguistics. Indeed, reviewers of the OUP reissues of four of Palmer's works in the 1960s (most of them edited by Mackin himself) appeared, in several cases, surprised at the parallels between his ideas and post-war practice, but tended to view him as a voice from another age, to be considered alongside Sweet and Jespersen as a significant precursor but not really as an influence on post-war theories and practice (e.g. Barrutia 1965, Roddis 1968, Darian 1969). By the end of the 1960s, 'scientific', American-inspired applied linguistic discourse had attained a position of dominance over discussions of ELT in the UK which was commented upon by Elliott as follows:

British people became seriously concerned with the teaching of English as a foreign language in the second and third decades of the twentieth century, because of the needs of African and Asian countries. [. . .] Their solutions to local problems were [. . .] empirical. In the work of these and later teachers, there is little or no trace of the influence of behaviourism, if we exclude habit-forming, which occurs as one of Palmer's nine principles of language teaching. [. . .]

In latter days the influence of behaviourism over language teaching has become more widespread, for three reasons: firstly, the development of American structural linguistics; secondly, the interest of structural linguists in language teaching; and thirdly, the widespread influence of the United States.

(Elliott 1972: 217)

There was a rise in the *belief*, then, that teaching ideas must necessarily come from contemporary linguistics and psychology, even when (as in the UK context) the

actual practices advocated in fact continued to owe as much to an experience-based 'tradition' as to the latest background research (hence the dominance of 'S-O-S' methodology within ELT up until the mid-1970s, and the fact that, rather than being seen to build on preceding practice, it is the *innovative* features of CLT and their consonance with background theory which have tended to be highlighted by applied linguists). Even though, for a considerable period, S-O-S continued to maintain its hold in practice as the British approach to ELT, it could be said that the 1960s saw an increasing dominance of American ideas in relation to *conceptions* of relevant sources of influence, that is, in relation to the 'discourse' of English language teaching. This shift to viewing academic applied linguistics as the source of teaching expertise can be seen to have been at the origin, not only of a damaging theory-practice divide (as remarked upon by Clarke (1994), Pennycook (1989) and others), but also of numerous misconceptions within present-day ELT regarding the sources of past and current practice. The continuing popularity of conceptualizations of the history of methods which give precedence to American developments, which distinguish methods from one another rather than considering their commonalities, and which view these methods as primarily dependent on background theory (Larsen-Freeman 2000, Richards and Rodgers 2001) has even resulted in present-day British professionals assuming that prior to CLT the dominant ELT approach was audiolingualism (e.g. Holliday forthcoming); thus, not even S-O-S is awarded recognition nowadays, let alone Palmer's pre-war work. Consecutive waves of apparently theory-driven innovation have swept away any general awareness of influence from Palmer and from his late nineteenth-century predecessors.

These developments can be seen as ironic in the sense that, more than anyone else, it was Palmer, building on Reform Movement achievements in the general area of modern language teaching, who first introduced an 'applied linguistic' dimension into the field of ELT as conceived within English-dominant countries, primarily in the UK via Hornby but also, as we shall now see, with possible influence even on the post-war rise of applied linguistics and audiolingualism in the USA. Certainly, audiolingualism shared significant similarities overall with aspects of Palmer's work, as has been discussed in detail by Glass (1979). Glass advances the claim, on the basis of his own comparative

analysis, that ‘the fundamental ideas underlying audio-lingualism are *not* to be found in the structural-behaviorist alliance. [. . .] Palmer was antecedent to the structural linguists and behaviorist psychologists in articulating these ideas’ (p. 2), but (as I have indicated in 1.5.2 above) he fails to explain how Palmer’s influence, if any, was mediated. Indeed, Palmer’s influence on post-war developments in the USA is much harder to ascertain than in the case of British practice, simply because American applied linguists, unlike Hornby, tended to acknowledge *no* prior influence from predecessors within an approach that was constituted as exclusively tied to background linguistic, and, later (for example, in Lado 1964), psychological insights. It is to primary sources, then, and to a few isolated references neglected by Glass (1979) that we must turn.

Despite a ‘fairly exhaustive search of many relevant scholarly North American journals between 1916 and 1940’, Glass (*ibid.*) failed to find much mention of Palmer, and the only suggestion he offers regarding a possible route of influence — aside from ‘possible, indeed highly probable [. . .] communication (direct and indirect) not reflected in the journals [. . .] between North American and European academics in the years between the world wars’ — is Bloomfield’s (1933) *Language*:

Bloomfield, the father of American structuralism, lists six of Palmer’s books in the bibliography of his classic work *Language*. Since every American structuralist of the Bloomfieldian era was by definition highly conversant with *Language*, it seems quite plausible that Palmer had at least an indirect influence on the generation of linguists which is alleged to have created the audio-lingual method.

Indeed, this suggestion is plausible, especially when we consider that Palmer’s (1921a) *The Principles of Language-Study* was by far the most recent of only four treatises under the heading ‘Foreign-language teaching’ specifically recommended in the notes to Bloomfield’s final chapter on ‘Applications and outlook’ (Bloomfield 1933: 524).²⁹ We should also take into account the fact that Bloomfield’s (1942)

29 The three other works were Sweet (1899), Viëtor (1902) and Jespersen (1901/1904). Two reports on modern language teaching practice in the USA (Coleman 1929) and France and Germany (McMurry, Mueller and Alexander 1930) were also recommended in the same Note. Buchanan and McPhee (1928) and, interestingly, West’s (1926b) *Learning to Read a Foreign Language* were also added as sole references in the areas of ‘Bibliography’ and ‘Vocabulary’, respectively.

Outline Guide for the Practical Study of Foreign Languages — which can be considered the ‘founding document’ of post-war audiolingualism (see Howatt 1984: 183, 265–66) — again cites Palmer (1921a), along with Sweet (1899), Sapir’s (1921) *Language* and Bloomfield’s own (1933) *Language* as one of only four books to be specifically recommended for giving ‘practical guidance in the study of languages’ (Bloomfield 1942: 5). My own research has shown that, during his 1931 US tour, Palmer met Bloomfield several times, reporting that ‘we see things absolutely eye-to-eye’.³⁰ Indeed, both Bloomfield and Sapir (whom Palmer had first visited even earlier, in 1926) had been members of IRET since its foundation (Naganuma 1934: 210, 213), presumably at Palmer’s initial invitation, and Sapir was to express his own appreciation in the following tribute:

[Palmer’s] numerous contributions to his fields of interest are well known to linguists and command the highest respect. I feel that he is one of the most acute critics we have in the field of language instruction and I have great admiration for his ability to analyse a linguistic problem and to see it adequately from both the theoretical and the practical points of view. I wish we had more men like Mr. Palmer in the university world in America.

(‘Congratulatory message’ in Naganuma 1934: 8)

Thus, although — in a situation where a restricted focus on reading was generally favoured by the modern language teaching establishment — Palmer found it hard to gain academic acceptance of his ideas during his 1931–32 US visit, his ideas *were*, it would appear, well-known and appreciated in the *linguistic* circles whose influence was to come to dominate language teaching in the wartime and post-war years. Via Bloomfield and Sapir, who, as IRET members, would have received regular instalments of the Institute’s *Bulletin*, Palmer’s work in Japan is likely to have been familiar at least to their own students at the universities of Chicago and Yale. He also found during his 1931–32 visit that his London publications were already well-known even among supporters of the Reading Method (a fact confirmed by Bond 1953: 117). Palmer had further contacts with the American

30 Entry for 8 December 1931, in an unpublished, handwritten ‘News-letter’ written for friends and family during his 1931–32 visit to the USA (in PFVA).

modern language teaching establishment in the course of his 1934 visit for the Carnegie Conference, and his contributions to vocabulary control both at that conference and in subsequent years made his name and work even more widely known. Indeed, it is clear that Fries himself, in compiling a scholarly comparison of the major English word lists which was first published in 1940, had familiarized himself with a number of Palmer's Japan publications including his (1934aa) *Specimens of English Construction Patterns* as well as his major (1917b, 1921a) London works (Fries and Traver 1950: 106).³¹ Fries's successor as Director of the Michigan English Language Institute, Robert Lado (1964: 5) was to acknowledge that 'Palmer developed a variety of oral drills that are the precursors of pattern practice',³² but Fries consistently avoided reference to him after 1940 or — when pressed, as by Japanese teachers familiar with Palmer's work in Japan — misrepresented his ideas in reasserting the novelty of his own approach. Thus,

the "Oral Approach" [. . .] is essentially different [from earlier 'oral methods', including Palmer's]. It is more than a set of oral classroom techniques. Its goal is *not limited* to the mastery of "conversational English" only. Its chief purpose is *not simply* the achieving of a good English pronunciation.

(Fries 1960/1965: 84, emphasis in original).

This can be seen as a case of 'protesting too much' and of wilful misrepresentation of Palmer's ideas, especially given Fries's proven familiarity with a much wider range of Palmer's work than was commonly the case.³³ Certainly, Diller (1971: 42)

31 Fries and Traver (1950) was originally published in 1940, according to the entry for this work in Fife (1949). Palmer's work on vocabulary control is summarized quite appreciatively on pp. 56–60, and no fewer than nine IRET publications are listed in the Bibliography, along with Palmer's major (1917b, 1921a) London publications. Fries also had access to and had consulted back copies of the IRET *Bulletin*, as is shown by his citing of articles by Palmer (1932n) and Faucett (1936).

32 In Freeman Twaddell's (1956/1970: 85) contribution to the 'Specialists' Conference' which signalled the start of the campaign to propagate Fries's Oral Approach in Japan there was further acknowledgment: 'An important recent set of stimulating influences has been the work of Palmer and to a lesser extent, of Michael West, which was carefully followed by a good many American educators interested in the teaching of modern languages. It should [. . .] be noted that in the 1920's language-teaching in the United States went through a period which now looks to many of us like a period of reaction and defeatism'.

33 This kind of mischaracterization is easier to understand if we consider that, from the outset, diverting support away from Palmer's ideas was seen as necessary by some for the Oral Approach to become established in Japan. As Rockefeller's representative at the 1956 Specialists' Conference reported, Fries and Twaddell were much more impressive than Hornby, who was 'overshadowed completely. In the process the British and Palmer have been reasonably well eliminated as ghosts,

is quite clear that the four main types of audiolingual pattern drill (substitution drills, transformation drills, response drills and translation drills) were all prefigured by Palmer, and he points out that in his (1917b, 1921a) London publications Palmer had called for both of the major procedures associated with audiolingualism, 'mim-mem' and 'pattern drills' (Diller 1971: 39–40). Also, 'in 1916 he came out with the first published book of pattern drills for English as a foreign language [Palmer 1916b]' (Diller 1971: 4). These insights are important because they allow us to see that audiolingualism was, at heart, an extension of just one strand of Palmer's early work, his 'Substitution Method' (cf. Palmer 1916a), a strand which was to maintain its importance for Palmer throughout his career (and which signalled an original, though probably Prendergast-derived departure from the Reform Movement advocacy of connected texts), but which was, ultimately, just that — a single strand in a much broader body of work. The audiolingual over-emphasis on this one strand was to give rise to a variety of methodological counter-reactions in the USA beginning in the 1960s, and the fact that some of these took up other of Palmer's ideas (again with no acknowledgment) can be taken as evidence both of the possible general influence of his ideas in the American context and of the way audiolingualism offered a much more limited vision than his own. Thus, James Asher's Total Physical Response (TPR), with a new psychological overlay, was strongly reminiscent of Palmer's ideas as presented in *English through Actions* (Palmer and Palmer, D. 1925c), while both this method and Krashen and Terrell's 'Natural Approach' (itself a throw-back to the 'Natural Method' of Heness and Sauveur (see Chapter 2)) were justified in terms of needs for an 'incubation period' and the value of activating 'subconscious assimilation' ('acquisition' as opposed to 'learning' in Krashen's own formulation) which Palmer had first identified as early as 1921 in *The Principles of Language-Study*.

At the same time, S–O–S, while broader than audiolingualism to the extent that it drew sustenance from a wider range of Palmer's ideas (reflecting, that is, a broader Direct Method conception) was also, in a sense, a single-track 'method', reflecting the particular (relatively late) stage of Hornby's involvement in IRET research and his consciousness of the need to 'apply' insights from this research

which greatly simplifies matters and clears the road for progress' (Donald H. McLean to John D. Rockefeller III, cited by Henrichsen 1989: 143).

rather than continue in experimentation close to context (see 8.14 above). The early development of S–O–S methodology was not complemented or legitimated in the British context by means of anything like the level of research which had occurred within IRET nor the type of university-based research which characterized the post-war period in the USA. The apparent lack of a basis in research made British expertise appear weakly grounded overseas in the face of American developments, giving rise to suggestions that a British equivalent to applied linguistics was needed, on the American model.³⁴

As I have implied, Palmer was himself, along with the Reform Movement theorists, a major precursor of ‘applied linguistics’. However, the reduction of the broad range of his ideas to audiolingualism and S–O–S methodology represented a kind of betrayal of Palmer’s own brand of a ‘science of language-teaching’, which, as we have seen, favoured practical experimentation over theory to practice transfer, and which was therefore less dogmatic and hierarchical than that of the post-war American applied linguists, or, indeed, than Hornby’s approach in ‘applying’ IRET research work. At the same time this ‘betrayal’ can be seen to have been connected to certain ‘narrowings’ of Palmer’s own interests at particular points (his enthusiastic early advocacy of the Substitution Method in the case of

34 Internal British Council correspondence (in BW 1/195, Public Records Office, Kew) between Ronald Mackin (at the time Education Officer (Linguistics) in Lahore) and R.E. Ockenden (Controller, Education Division, in London) is instructive in this respect. Mackin writes (28 November 1953) that ‘In spite of the excellent material which has appeared over the past few years in “English Language Teaching”, it cannot be denied that the output of publications as a result of research in English teaching in England seems to lag behind that of the United States. This opinion I know is shared by other Education Officers of the Council’. He proposes that the Council should sponsor research posts at the Institute of Education (since, when he was last there, ‘the small group of lecturers engaged in the Course on the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language had it [*sic*] hands full dealing with the day to day work of the Course and preparing material for the BBC English by Radio Programmes’. He goes on, ‘I have often heard it claimed that the British are ahead of the Americans in research in English Teaching but it is rather difficult to justify this statement by pointing to well-known British publications of recent date. I doubt whether we have anything to compare with the various publications of the American C.C. Fries’. Ockenden reported in reply (7 December 1953) that he had been in touch with Pattison, who had informed him that ‘The lecturers in the Department of English as a foreign language are not yet ready to publish their work, and it will probably be difficult to find two qualified workers to undertake linguistic research at the present time’. Ockenden concludes that ‘it seems unlikely the Insitute will approach Council for funds for research’ but if they did so, Mackin’s comments would ‘certainly be borne in mind’. After the 1954 Drogheda Report made funds available for British Council expansion into ELT in developing countries moves were quickly made to establish an applied linguistic research base at Edinburgh (this development was already being discussed at a British Council staff conference in 1955, for example (‘Reports from 1955 Staff Conference on the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language, Merton College, Oxford 27th June to 8th July 1955’, in BW 1/314, Public Records Office, Kew).

audiolingualism, and the decontextualization involved in later research efforts in Japan (see Chapter 8) in the case of the S–O–S approach.

Palmer, like Sweet before him and like the post-war generation of American applied linguists, was concerned always to justify his ideas according to available linguistic insights and language learning theory. The linguistics and psychology of his time were, of course, different from those of today, and he emphasized both a form of structuralism, with an emphasis on what would be identified today as ‘linguistic’ rather than ‘communicative’ competence, and an early form of behaviourism which make him in many respects similar to the first post-war applied linguists. However, and this is a crucial point, Palmer was never content to simply ‘apply’ findings from background disciplines, nor was he dogmatically attached to them. This is shown in the way his ‘structuralism’ was complemented both by a keen awareness of the ‘generative’ properties of language and, at times, by an interest in ‘notions’ and ‘functions’ of language which allowed him to be both cited by Barrutia (1965) as a ‘predecessor’ of Chomskyan insights and referred to by the Council of Europe for their work leading to specifications of notional-functional syllabi. At the same time, Palmer’s practical interest in language learning took him into new theoretical areas, enabling him, for example, to considerably predate the learning–acquisition distinction popularized by Krashen in the 1980s. Palmer’s resistance to dogma and his concern not simply to take advantage of the best of contemporary background work but to *develop* new insights when appropriate background theory was lacking were hallmarks of his approach which distinguished him both from Sweet (with his attachment to phonetics and associationism) and the applied linguists of the immediate post-war period (with their own attachment to structural linguistics and behaviourism). Palmer’s ‘applied linguistic’ stance, then, was not akin to ‘linguistics [or psychology] applied’ (Widdowson 1980), but was closer instead to that of later applied linguists in the British tradition like Peter Stevens, Henry Widdowson, David Wilkins and N.S. Prabhu who had pursued ELT careers themselves and who retained a major focus on practice when theorizing pedagogic problems. Beyond this, even, Palmer’s conception of the links between theory and practice involved a principled eclecticism and valuing of experimentation by teachers which were largely superseded within post-war UK and US developments. Since the kind of applied linguistics promoted by Fries via

Language Learning reflected a conception closer to Sweet's 'linguistics applied' than to Palmer's eclectic, problem-oriented 'science of language-teaching', the latter can be termed both one of his major original contributions and his chief 'unclaimed inheritance'.

11 Conclusion

By way of conclusion to this historical investigation into the roots of ELT, I shall consider the extent to which the aims stated at the end of Chapter 1 have been achieved. On this basis I shall draw out some possible lessons for present-day ELT while also identifying the limitations of this study and needs for further historical research in a variety of areas.

My first aim was to ‘present a fuller and more accurate account than has so far been available of the career and legacy of Harold E. Palmer’. In Chapter 2, I described the background to Palmer’s ideas in late-nineteenth / early-twentieth-century language teaching and in Chapter 3 presented an overview of developments towards the establishment of ELT, in order to provide context for the more detailed account of Palmer’s career and legacy which followed in Chapters 4 to 10. In the following respects this account *can* be seen as considerably fuller and more accurate than those previously presented, at least in the following respects:

- It is based overall on a more complete and accurate bibliography of Palmer’s writings than has previously been established;
- It provides a much fuller picture of Palmer’s formative years (in Chapter 4) and early teaching experiences in Verviers (in Chapter 5);
- It provides new details relating to Palmer’s teaching experiences during his years in London (in Chapter 6), thus contextualizing the works which have been viewed as his ‘classic’ contributions to language teaching theory (in particular, Palmer 1917b, 1921a);
- On the basis of previous investigations by researchers in Japan as well as my own original research, the thesis provides a fuller description of Palmer’s work while based in Japan, thus enabling a more accurate picture to be drawn of his legacy both to English teaching there (in 8.15) and to UK-based ELT (in Chapter 10);
- A.S. Hornby’s attempts to continue Palmer’s work in Japan have also been described (in Chapter 8), and this has allowed new insights to be offered into the way he mediated Palmer’s legacy to post-war ELT (in Chapter 10).

A second overall aim of the thesis was to ‘shed light on the roots of ELT, with a view to establishing more solid foundations for present-day professionalism in this field’; my third and final aim was to ‘present an adequately justified and carefully researched account, to show the value and enhance the status of research into the history of language teaching within applied linguistics’. I shall consider this last aim first, since whether or not my account provides solid foundations for present-day professionalism can be seen to depend partly on the validity and accuracy of the research undertaken. With regard to this aim, I venture to suggest that the account I have presented is, overall, adequately justified and carefully researched, in the following major respects:

- Needs for historical investigation into language teaching have previously been recognized, and were further argued for in relation specifically to ELT in Chapter 1. As suggested there, Palmer’s significance within ELT history has been alluded to in general terms by previous writers, but there has previously been relatively little original research into his career and legacy, and this justifies the present account from a ‘scholarly’ perspective. I also argued that further investigation of the roots of ELT is particularly timely, given widespread present-day disquiet regarding its supposed colonial antecedents;
- As indicated in my review of ‘Previous Palmer studies’ in Chapter 1, ‘there have been relatively few scholarly contributions which go beyond simply summarizing Palmer’s London publications and/or repeating information from existing secondary sources’. Throughout my own account, I have adopted a critical stance towards existing secondary sources, attempting to ‘triangulate’ these with other sources of information, and to assess their relative credibility. Consistent attachment to this procedure, enhanced by the way I have accessed a wide range of primary sources (see below), has resulted in the correction of many inaccuracies contained in previous accounts, although I have not always indicated these corrections explicitly. By these means, I hope I have provided a ‘model’ alternative to the relatively uncritical citation of existing secondary sources which has tended to be characteristic of accounts of ELT and applied linguistic history in the past.

- My own research has involved frequent recourse to primary sources, including many archival sources not previously consulted (indeed, I have been able to build on and extend Howatt's (1984) achievements largely by consulting archive documents, personal papers, newspaper articles and oral sources which were not accessed by him). The care I have attempted to take in referencing my sources and the amount of factual detail I have provided will, I hope, enable future researchers to build on this account and to judge its validity for themselves; in other words, I have attempted to ensure throughout that the research reported here is falsifiable.

Bearing in mind these 'scholarly' achievements, I believe that my attempt to 'enhance the status of research into the history of language teaching within applied linguistics' has been partially successful. 'Partially' only, because a true enhancement will additionally require more in the way of public activity than has been attempted in the past, certainly more than can be offered by a PhD thesis alone. Some actions I have engaged in while writing this thesis *might be worth* recording, although to recount them is beyond the bounds of the genre, strictly speaking: aside from writing for publication as recorded in section 3 of the Bibliography, I have organized colloquia and given presentations on historical themes at international conferences, and, perhaps more significantly in the long term, I have begun to establish and publicize an accessible collection of key sources and archive material devoted to the history and 'pre-history' of ELT at the Centre for English Language Teacher Education, University of Warwick, where I currently work. Aside from continuing efforts in these directions, I hope that it may be possible in the future to organize specialist conferences and perhaps establish a newsletter / journal, or even some kind of association devoted to the history of (English) language teaching, along the lines of the French and Japanese academic societies whose existence was referred to in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

Another aspect of my third aim — to 'show the value' of the history of language teaching within applied linguistics — is, perhaps, more difficult to achieve than establishing its validity as a scholarly pursuit, but is no less important if the status of history is to be enhanced in the future. Since applied linguistics can be considered, by definition, a practice-oriented activity, history within the field should

presumably have implications for current practice. Such implications will not necessarily be direct or obvious, but history will probably only ever be perceived as ‘valuable’ by practitioners and other end-users of applied linguistics, that is, *useful* to them, to the extent that any lessons it has for the present can be made relatively explicit. My own aim in the area of ‘usefulness’ was to ‘shed light on the roots of ELT, with a view to establishing more solid foundations for present-day professionalism in this field’, and so I shall conclude with a summary of my major findings with regard to the roots of ELT, highlighting also attendant limitations and directions for future research, and with a final, personal assessment of some lessons for present-day practice and ‘professionalism’ which could legitimately be drawn.

My findings regarding the roots of ELT as reported in this thesis can be summarized briefly as follows:

- Defining ELT as a particular enterprise which arose in specific temporal (post-World War II) and geographical (UK-based) circumstances (see 1.2), I have been able to show how the pioneering work carried out in Asian contexts by Lawrence Faucett, Harold Palmer and Michael West was ‘brought back’ to the UK in the pre-war era; the rise of Basic English and the concerted opposition to its diffusion were shown to have contributed significantly to the development in pre-war Britain of an awareness of the specificity and importance of the teaching of English as a foreign language which paved the way for the post-war establishment of ELT (see, in particular, Chapter 3).
- By means of Chapters 2 and 3 on the background to Palmer’s work and Chapter 10 on his legacy, this account has both explained and re-established the importance of his contributions, when compared with other influences, in the development of methodological foundations for ELT;
- In particular, by means of my account of Palmer’s (and of Hornby’s) work in Japan, I have shed light on a ‘missing link’ in the pre-history of ELT. In describing the roots of ‘S–O–S’ methodology (in 10.2), I have indicated the particular salience of Hornby’s post-war contributions and of the way he mediated Palmer’s legacy;
- By contextualizing Palmer’s ideas within late-nineteenth / early-twentieth-century developments (in Chapter 2) and by adopting a relatively broad

temporal perspective with regard to his legacy (in 10.2), I have also indicated that Palmer himself mediated the work of previous innovators and reformers to ELT (as well as, possibly, to TESOL in the USA);

- I have also suggested that Palmer's particular interpretation of the nineteenth-century legacy has maintained its influence up until the present-day, although the type of applied linguistics established in the post-war years differed in important respects from the conception of an eclectic 'science of language-teaching' which he held to in practice as well as theory for most of his career.

Some possible implications of my findings for present-day practice and professionalism will be considered below. However, certain limitations of my analysis of the roots of ELT methodology need to be borne in mind, and should first be listed. Together with associated indications of directions for future research, these limitations can be seen to include the following:

- A study which focuses on one individual, however significant the role that individual may have played, tends inevitably to exaggerate his (or her) achievement; although I have attempted to provide sufficient contextualization and to avoid hagiography, it is probable that the importance of other individuals has been under-emphasized in my account; Appendices 1, 3, 6 and 8 (containing biographical portraits of important figures other than Palmer) are intended to counteract this tendency, and to provide source material for further research. However, with respect to the immediate roots of ELT methodology, the careers and contributions of the following have perhaps been under-emphasized and would repay particular further investigation and assessment: E. Parnwell, C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards (as 'precursors' of ELT), and F.G. French, I. Morris, W. Stannard Allen, A.W. Frisby, Percival Gurrey, Bruce Pattison, A.V.P. Elliott, J.A. Noonan, W.F. Mackey, D. Abercrombie and J.C. Catford (as 'leaders' of ELT in the immediate post-war era).
- Historical research which is primarily biographical (as recommended by Stern (1983: 87)) can serve a useful purpose as an antidote to studies which tend to lack a human dimension, for example accounts which fetishize 'methods' or otherwise neglect individual initiative. Indeed, I have been concerned

throughout to steer a path midway between conventional ‘potted histories’ of language teaching method which neglect the way ideas on language teaching have been developed in and for particular contexts and, on the other hand, more ‘ideological’ accounts which may tend to view individual teachers/theorists as victims of ‘macro’ forces or ‘discourses’ (linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992), for example, or the ‘discourses of colonialism’ (Pennycook 1998)). Primarily biographical research can be ‘well-grounded’, then, but it probably does tend to neglect the reality of forces larger than the individual. In my own account I have at least identified the following forces as salient in the development of Palmer’s ideas or in the mediation of his legacy, but their wider effects on language teaching history deserve to be investigated further, and on their own terms:

- international tensions throughout the first half of the twentieth century (and the relationship of these with internationalist language movements involving, for example, Esperanto and Basic English);
- Christian missionary activity (and its relationship with linguistic orientation for prospective missionaries and the development of ideas specifically on language *learning*, as well as ideas for and attitudes to teaching English, as illustrated in the work of Lawrence Faucett);
- other colonial activity (involving changes in views of the role of English in the Empire, as illustrated, for example, in the work of Michael West);
- expansion into and changing perceptions of the nature of overseas markets among publishers including Oxford University Press and Longmans;
- the rise of ultranationalism in Japan and fascism in Germany and Italy (and the relationship of these with pre-war resistance to English on the one hand and the development of conceptions of ‘English as a world language’ (at the Carnegie conference) and of ‘cultural diplomacy’ by The British Council on the other);
- the influx of refugees and allied service personnel which contributed to developments in teaching English as a foreign language *within* Britain in the late 1930s and in the wartime years;

- technological developments including the rise of the gramophone and of radio broadcasting (offering new ways for language teaching to be mediated);
- in the post-war period, the coming to independence of former British colonies, the Cold War, Anglo-American cooperation and rivalries (and important developments including the worldwide diffusion of S-O-S methodology and the rise of applied linguistics to which these contributed).

Rather than investigating these phenomena in detail and therefore providing a truly comprehensive account of the roots of ELT, my investigation is probably best seen as having provided partial insights which can inform future, well-grounded research into these 'wider forces'.

- In deciding to focus on the career and legacy of Harold Palmer, I have inevitably emphasized one strand, albeit, as I have argued, probably the most important strand of influence on ELT methodology in the immediate post-war period — one of experience theorized rather than linguistics applied or linguistic imperialism. Two caveats need to be mentioned here. First, as recognized in Chapter 1, my choice of a focus was partly motivated by an awareness of the neglect Palmer's work – and, I have increasingly realized, that of his predecessors – has suffered from both within conventional 'progressivist' histories of method and in recent accounts which emphasize the colonial legacy (see, in particular, Pennycook 1998). Perhaps I have been guilty at certain points of overstating the case that neither applied linguistic dogma *nor* English teaching in the Empire were as influential on ELT, at least initially, as they have been made out to be, guilty, in other words, of 'making an argument' in order to re-establish the value of a Palmerian tradition of principled, context-sensitive eclecticism. My case will, then, need to be tested by further investigations into (not just assertions regarding) the historical impact of applied linguistics and of the colonial legacy, indeed both these areas offer wide scope for future researchers. Secondly, I have become aware in the course of my own research that the ideas and materials of Michael West, Lawrence Faucett and, indeed, C.K. Ogden were (probably in the first two cases, certainly in the latter case) more widely known in the 1930s, both in the UK and the USA, than those of Palmer. Although, as I have attempted to show, Palmer's proposals were

ultimately more influential, this should not be taken to mean that they were more important at the time than the ideas of these contemporaries, nor that these alternative ideas lack present-day interest. The development and diffusion of Basic English and the way this was resisted by Faucett, West and Palmer has emerged as a particularly important historical phenomenon which would certainly repay further study, not least by those with an interest in the ambiguities of internationalism and 'linguistic imperialism'. Michael West's work on 'teaching English in difficult circumstances' (West 1960), his overall educational as opposed to 'applied linguistic' orientation, and his prioritization of textbook construction, of reading and of technical / scientific English all deserve present-day reappraisal in the light of recent criticisms that ELT and applied linguistics have tended to ignore the realities of teaching and learning in developing countries.

- There are needs not just for histories of ideas in the field of language teaching, but for histories of language teaching *practice*. Too often, introductory methodological texts present brief historical overviews which discuss developments in theory without indicating how ideas have been translated into practice, indeed have often derived *from* practice in the past. I have attempted to keep at least half an eye on 'practice' in the present thesis, for example by relating the early elaboration of Palmer's ideas to the way he experimented in his own teaching in Verviers, by indicating the relationship of his London publications to his teaching commitments at the time, and by attempting to maintain a focus (in Chapters 7 and 8) both on the effects of his ideas on Japanese teachers and on the way they helped him to modify his initial assumptions; however, this remains, primarily, a history of ideas rather than of practice, and further investigations will be needed to correct this bias;
- Relating to these last points, future historians of ELT or TESOL could profitably investigate the *reception* of ideas emanating from the UK and the USA in various contexts around the world (I have attempted to do so at points in the course of my account of developments in Japan (Chapters 7 and 8), but more could probably have been achieved in this area). Beyond the particular discourses of ELT, TESOL and (Anglo-American) applied linguistics themselves, there is also much scope for further histories which would focus on

the ‘indigenous’ language teaching traditions in various countries (in the way sketched out at the beginning of Chapter 7, where I attempted to portray the background to Palmer’s work in Japan). Such histories would help to counteract the assumptions which linger in many texts for teachers that the history of ELT has everywhere been the same.

- The difficulty of establishing relative degrees of ‘influence’ also needs to be recognized. My assessment of Palmer’s legacy to ELT in Chapter 10 is, in large measure, speculative, and would — as I have argued above — benefit from confirmation or refutation by further evidence-based research. There are particular needs for further investigation of the history of the establishment of applied linguistics in the USA, and of the roots of ‘audiolingualism’. Links between these developments and those in the UK also deserve to be better researched. Finally, the history of ELT after 1960 has not been treated in depth in this thesis, and also requires further investigation.
- In sum, there are many areas which need to be investigated more thoroughly, and, doubtless, variant readings will emerge in the future regarding Palmer’s career and legacy, and the roots of ELT as identified in this thesis.

Given this catalogue of probable deficiencies, and of needs for further research if the roots of ELT are to be comprehensively analysed, it might seem foolhardy to draw out *any* ‘lessons’ for present-day practice from my account. As I have also argued above, however, for the status of historical research to become better established within applied linguistics any implications it might have for current practice should be made relatively explicit, and I do need to indicate the ways in which my investigation might have contributed to the as yet undiscussed aim of ‘establishing more solid foundations for present-day professionalism’.

I shall conclude this thesis, then, in the same way as I began it, with some explicitly subjective and partial reflections, in this case regarding some implications for the development of ‘professionalism’ which I personally see emerging from my research.

In the first place, and despite the caveats indicated above, I believe that the main contribution of my research lies in the way it places the roots of ELT methodology firmly in nineteenth-century ideas on language teaching, as mediated

by Palmer, then Hornby. Tied in with this, the research has revealed to me the *continuity* of a particular tradition, and of associated tenets, thus counteracting dominant views which tend to see present-day ELT as the culmination of a procession of ever-changing methods. There has been continuity through time, then, to a greater extent than is normally realized, and it could be said that a particular, limited *paradigm* has tended throughout to dominate ELT methodology. One aspect of this paradigm is a confident belief in the modernity of ELT itself, and in constant progress, that is, in the inevitable superiority of present ideas to those of the past, including the traditions encountered in non-western teaching contexts around the world. The prevalence of this attitude (to which Palmer was, it should be recognized, a party, and which he himself promoted) explains the neglect the historical record has suffered from, but the increasing recognition of its limitations nowadays also suggests that historical research of the kind I have engaged in here can play a constructive role in the development of future, more appropriate methodologies.

Thus, one effect of reestablishing Palmer's work as *the* major methodological influence on what became British ELT (as opposed to the post-war applied linguistic or more recently adduced colonial sources which have tended to be emphasized) is that this can enable teachers to engage in a more nuanced assessment of the limitations and, indeed, successes of this enterprise. One thing that could be emphasized in the latter domain, for instance, is the possible continuing *appropriateness* of mainstream ELT ideas for teaching English as a foreign language, in situations where a basically 'technical', utilitarian approach is appropriate (for example, in the teaching of adults with specific needs), or when such an approach is considered appropriate *locally* as a counterweight to 'inefficient' forms of language teaching within formal education. Teachers associated with IRLT in Japan still find value in various adaptations of Palmer's ideas, and it should be recalled that the Reform Movement which influenced him to a significant extent had been led originally by 'non-native speaker' teachers interested above all in improvement within Continental European school systems. Many non-native speaker teachers around the world, in this sense, are still struggling to achieve their own 'Reform Movement', and the way Palmer's relatively context-sensitive philosophy of principled eclecticism ('multiple lines of

approach') enabled adaption to the Japanese context could still serve as a model for ways of 'making ELT appropriate' in such settings.

From another perspective, however, the possible *inappropriateness* of mainstream ELT in schools and universities around the world also needs to be held in the balance, largely staffed as they are by non-native speaker teachers with their own strengths and limitations, with *educational* as well as practical goals to consider, and with a wide variety of constraints to contend with. Palmer, despite his own early rejection of dogmatic monolingualism, and the way he changed his emphasis away from purely oral work during his time in Japan, never fully left behind his formative experience as a native speaker teacher of adults in his own Institute, where he was free to innovate. His lack of exposure to the Reform Movement legacy in the area of connected texts and his deliberate 'technicist' avoidance, following on from Sweet, of the 'higher' educational goals of foreign language study may, given his influence on post-war ELT, have had deleterious consequences in school settings throughout the world (cf. Phillipson 1992: 244–45). The assumption of writers like Holliday (1994) that the inappropriateness involved in methodology transfers from the ELT 'centre' to the 'periphery' in the post-war era relate simply to the privileged conditions attendant on language school EFL in centre settings is a false one from a historical perspective (it was only in the 1960s that the UK-based language school industry began to develop, but S–O–S had begun to be spread overseas much earlier). Instead, the inappropriateness of ELT can be seen to have had earlier and deeper roots, deriving from Palmer's marrying of the utilitarian 'language teaching for adults' tradition described in Chapter 2 to the particular kind of 'technical' applied linguistic approach advocated by Sweet (as opposed to Viëtor or Jespersen, for example, who were more familiar with school teaching and had broader educational concerns).

Thus, although I have in 10.2.2 above emphasized the value of the relative eclecticism, that is, lack of dogmatism of Palmer's 'multiple lines of approach' conception when compared with Sweet and post-war applied linguistics, ultimately even the kind of experimentation close to context which he advocated and practised initially in Japan cannot be said to have superseded either his overwhelming attachment to methodological 'efficiency' (relevant, perhaps, more to the needs of adults than to school-teaching) or the attachment to linguistics and psychology (and

concomitant blindness to the claims of local traditions, wider educational considerations, and socio-political issues) which he took over particularly from Sweet. These limitations were at the root of his approach, and Palmer continued largely to ignore them despite the setbacks he met with in Japan. Indeed, the lessons of his relative failure to reform English teaching in the Japanese school context were not taken into account either by Hornby (who contributed to the confident application of the IRET-derived S-O-S approach in school settings throughout the world in the 1950s and 1960s) or by Fries and his applied linguistic successors (who failed even to acknowledge, let alone learn any lessons from the pre-war reform efforts of Palmer in Japan).

A further 'lesson' of the thesis, then, is that teachers around the world need to continue to be wary of the limitations of the kind of 'universalist', 'scientific' and 'utilitarian' approach which Palmer — despite the qualities of breadth of vision, orientation to practice, and principled eclecticism which were neglected within post-war applied linguistics — in the final analysis did as much as anyone else to propagate. At the same time, from the relative breadth of Palmer's vision teachers might derive inspiration to resist the ever-present temptations of reductionism to 'method', and to engage instead in continuous experimentation with a view to methodological appropriateness in their own settings.

Finally, then, the kind of historical perspective offered in the present thesis can, I believe, enable teachers to develop new insights into current critical issues concerning, for example, the value of 'native speaker' based norms and monolingual methodologies, cross-cultural appropriateness of teaching techniques and materials, the various hegemonies associated with applied linguistics, and the overall relationship of ELT to cultural and linguistic imperialism. Continuing historical investigation relating to these areas should prove useful in helping current and future ELT professionals develop their own understandings, on research-based foundations.